ERNEST

HEMINGWAY

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY:

A FAREWELL TO ARMS, THE SUN ALSO RISES AND OTHERS

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

The Collected Works of Ernest Hemingway

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Ernest Hemingway

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

CONTENTS

The Torrents of Spring

The Sun Also Rises

A Farewell to Arms

To Have and Have Not

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Across the River and Into the Trees

The Old Man and the Sea

Islands in the Stream

The Garden of Eden

About the Author

About the Series

Copyright

About the Publisher

ERNEST

HEMINGWAY

THE TORRENTS OF SPRING

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

The Torrents of Spring

Ernest Hemingway

CONTENTS

PART ONE

Chapter One
Chapter Two
Chapter Three
Chapter Four
Chapter Five

PART TWO

Chapter Six
Chapter Seven
Chapter Eight
Chapter Nine
Chapter Ten

PART THREE

Chapter Eleven
Chapter Twelve

PART FOUR

Chapter Thirteen
Chapter Fourteen
Chapter Fifteen
Chapter Sixteen

Author's Final Note to the Reader

PART ONE

Red and Black Laughter

The only source of the true Ridiculous (as it appears to me) is affectation.

HENRY FIELDING

CHAPTER ONE

Yogi Johnson stood looking out of the window of a big pump-factory in Michigan. Spring would soon be here. Could it be that what this writing fellow Hutchinson had said, “If winter comes can spring be far behind?” would be true again this year? Yogi Johnson wondered. Near Yogi at the next window but one stood Scripps O’Neil, a tall, lean man with a tall, lean face. Both stood and looked out at the empty yard of the pump-factory. Snow covered the crated pumps that would soon be shipped away. Once the spring should come and the snow melt, workmen from the factory would break out the pumps from piles where they were snowed in and haul them down to the G. R. & I. station, where they would be loaded on flat-cars and shipped away. Yogi Johnson looked out of the window at the snowed-in pumps, and his breath made little fairy tracings on the cold windowpane. Yogi Johnson thought of Paris. Perhaps it was the little fairy tracings that reminded him of the gay city where he had once spent two weeks. Two weeks that were to have been the happiest weeks of his life. That was all behind him now. That and everything else.

Scripps O’Neil had two wives. As he looked out of the window, standing tall and lean and resilient with his own tenuous hardness, he thought of both of them. One lived in Mancelona and the other lived in Petoskey. He had not seen the wife who lived in Mancelona since last spring. He looked out at the snow-covered pump-yards and thought what spring would mean. With his wife in Mancelona Scripps often got drunk. When he was drunk he and his wife were happy. They would go down together to the railway station and

walk out along the tracks, and then sit together and drink and watch the trains go by. They would sit under a pine-tree on a little hill that overlooked the railway and drink. Sometimes they drank all night. Sometimes they drank for a week at a time. It did them good. It made Scripps strong. Scripps had a daughter whom he playfully called Lousy O'Neil. Her real name was Lucy O'Neil. One night, after Scripps and his old woman had been out drinking on the railroad line for three or four days, he lost his wife. He didn't know where she was. When he came to himself everything was dark. He walked along the railroad track toward town. The ties were stiff and hard under his feet. He tried walking on the rails. He couldn't do it. He had the dope on that all right: He went back to walking along the ties. It was a long way into town. Finally he came to where he could see the lights of the switch-yard. He cut away from the tracks and passed the Mancelona High School. It was a yellow-brick building. There was nothing rococo about it, like the buildings he had seen in Paris. No, he had never been in Paris. That was not he. That was his friend Yogi Johnson.

Yogi Johnson looked out of the window. Soon it would be time to shut the pump-factory for the night. He opened the window carefully, just a crack. Just a crack, but that was enough. Outside in the yard the snow had begun to melt. A warm breeze was blowing. A Chinook wind the pump fellows called it. The warm chinook wind came in through the window into the pump-factory. All the workmen laid down their tools. Many of them were Indians.

The foreman was a short, iron-jawed man. He had once made a trip as far as Duluth. Duluth was far across the blue waters of the lake in the hills of Minnesota. A wonderful thing had happened to him there.

The foreman put his finger in his mouth to moisten it and held it up in the air. He felt the warm breeze on his finger. He shook his head ruefully and smiled at the men, a little grimly perhaps.

"Well, it's a regular chinook, boys," he said.

Silently for the most part, the workmen hung up their tools. The half-completed pumps were put away in their racks. The workmen filed, some of them talking, others silent, a few muttering, to the washroom to wash up.

Outside through the window came the sound of an Indian war-whoop.

CHAPTER TWO

Scripps O'Neil stood outside the Mancelona High School looking up at the lighted windows. It was dark and the snow was falling. It had been falling ever since Scripps could remember. A passer-by stopped and stared at Scripps. After all, what was this man to him? He went on.

Scripps stood in the snow and stared up at the lighted windows of the High School. Inside there people were learning things. Far into the night they worked, the boys vying with the girls in their search for knowledge, this urge for the learning of things that was sweeping America. His girl, little Lousy, a girl that had cost him a cool seventy-five dollars in doctors' bills, was in there learning. Scripps was proud. It was too late for him to learn, but there, day after day and night after night, Lousy was learning. She had the stuff in her, that girl.

Scripps went on up to his house. It was not a big house, but it wasn't size that mattered to Scripps's old woman.

"Scripps," she often said when they were drinking together, "I don't want a palace. All I want is a place to keep the wind out." Scripps had taken her at her word. Now, as he walked in the late evening through the snow and saw the lights of his own home, he felt glad that he had taken her at her word. It was better this way than if he were coming home to a palace. He, Scripps, was not the sort of chap that wanted a palace.

He opened the door of his house and went in. Something kept going through his head. He tried to get it out, but it was no good. What was it that poet chap his friend Harry Parker had met once in

Detroit had written? Harry used to recite it: “Through pleasures and palaces though I may roam. When you something something something there’s no place like home.” He could not remember the words. Not all of them. He had written a simple tune to it and taught Lucy to sing it. That was when they first were married. Scripps might have been a composer, one of these chaps that write the stuff the Chicago Symphony Orchestra plays, if he had had a chance to go on. He would get Lucy to sing that song tonight. He would never drink again. Drinking robbed him of his ear for music. Times when he was drunk the sound of the whistles of the trains at night pulling up the Boyne Falls grade seemed more lovely than anything this chap Stravinsky had ever written. Drinking had done that. It was wrong. He would get away to Paris. Like this chap Albert Spalding that played the violin.

Scripps opened the door. He went in. “Lucy,” he called, “it is I, Scripps.” He would never drink again. No more nights out on the railroad. Perhaps Lucy needed a new fur coat. Perhaps, after all, she had wanted a palace instead of this place. You never knew how you were treating a woman. Perhaps, after all, this place was not keeping out the wind. Fantastic. He lit a match. “Lucy!” he called, and there was a note of dumb terror in his mouth. His friend Walt Simmons had heard just such a cry from a stallion that had once been run over by a passing autobus in the Place Vendome in Paris. In Paris there were no geldings. All the horses were stallions. They did not breed mares. Not since the war. The war changed all that.

“Lucy!” he called, and again “Lucy!” There was no answer. The house was empty. Through the snow-filled air, as he stood there alone in his tall leanness, in his own deserted house, there came to Scripps’s ears the distant sound of an Indian war-whoop.

CHAPTER THREE

Scripps left Mancelona. He was through with that place. What had a town like that to give him? There was nothing to it. You worked all your life and then a thing like that happened. The savings of years wiped out. Everything gone. He started to Chicago to get a job. Chicago was the place. Look at its geographical situation, right at the end of Lake Michigan. Chicago would do big things. Any fool could see that. He would buy land in what is now the Loop, the big shopping and manufacturing district. He would buy the land at a low price and then hang onto it. Let them try and get it away from him. He knew a thing or two now.

Alone, bareheaded, the snow blowing in his hair, he walked down the G. R. & I. railway tracks. It was the coldest night he had ever known. He picked up a dead bird that had frozen and fallen onto the railroad tracks and put it inside his shirt to warm it. The bird nestled close to his warm body and pecked at his chest gratefully.

"Poor little chap," Scripps said. "'You feel the cold too."

Tears came into his eyes.

"Drat that wind," Scripps said and once again faced into the blowing snow. The wind was blowing straight down from Lake Superior. The telegraph wires above Scripps's head sang in the wind. Through the dark, Scripps saw a great yellow eye coming toward him. The giant locomotive came nearer through the snow-storm. Scripps stepped to one side of the track to let it go by. What is it that old writing fellow Shakespeare says: "Might makes right"? Scripps thought of that quotation as the train went past him in the

snowing darkness. First the engine passed. He saw the fireman bending to fling great shovelfuls of coal into the open furnace door. The engineer wore goggles. His face was lit up by the light from the open door of the engine. He was the engineer. It was he who had his hand on the throttle. Scripps thought of the Chicago anarchists who, when they were hanged, said: “Though you throttle us today, still you cannot something something our souls.” There was a monument where they were buried in Waldheim Cemetery, right beside the Forest Park Amusement Park, in Chicago. His father used to take Scripps out there on Sundays. The monument was all black and there was a black angel. That was when Scripps had been a little boy. He used often to ask his father: “Father, why if we come to look at the anarchists on Sunday why can’t we ride on the shoot the chutes?” He had never been satisfied with his father’s answer. He had been a little boy in knee pants then. His father had been a great composer. His mother was an Italian woman from the north of Italy. They are strange people, these north Italians.

Scripps stood beside the track, and the long black segments of the train clicked by him in the snow. All the cars were Pullmans. The blinds were down. Light came in thin slits from the bottom of the dark windows as the cars went by. The train did not roar by as it might have if it had been going in the other direction, because it was climbing the Boyne Falls grade. It went slower than if it had been going down. Still it went too fast for Scripps to hitch on. He thought how he had been an expert at hitching on grocery wagons when he was a young boy in knee pants.

The long black train of Pullman cars passed Scripps as he stood beside the tracks. Who were in those cars? Were they Americans, piling up money while they slept? Were they mothers? Were they fathers? Were there lovers among them? Or were they Europeans, members of a worn-out civilization world-weary from the war? Scripps wondered.

The last car passed him and the train went on up the track.

Scripps watched the red light at its stern disappearing into the blackness through which the snowflakes now came softly. The bird fluttered inside his shirt. Scripps started along the ties. He wanted to get to Chicago that night, if possible, to start work in the morning. The bird fluttered again. It was not so feeble now. Scripps put his hand on it to still its little bird flutterings. The bird was calmed. Scripps strode on up the track.

After all, he did not need to go as far as Chicago. There were other places. What if that critic fellow Henry Mencken had called Chicago the Literary Capital of America? There was Grand Rapids. Once in Grand Rapids, he could start in in the furniture business. Fortunes had been made that way. Grand Rapids furniture was famous wherever young couples walked in the evening to talk of home-making. He remembered a sign he had seen in Chicago as a little boy. His mother had pointed it out to him as together they walked barefoot through what now is probably the Loop, begging from door to door. His mother loved the bright flashing of the electric lights in the sign.

"They are like San Miniato in my native Florence," she told Scripps. "Look at them; my son," she said, "for some day your music will be played there by the Firenze Symphony Orchestra."

Scripps had often watched the sign for hours while his mother slept wrapped in an old shawl on what is now probably the Blackstone Hotel. The sign had made a great impression on him.

LET HARTMAN FEATHER YOUR NEST it had said. It flashed in many different colors. First a pure, dazzling white. That was what Scripps loved best. Then it flashed a lovely green. Then it flashed red. One night as he lay crouched against his mother's body warmth and watched the sign flash, a policeman came up. "You'll have to move along," he said.

Ah, yes, there was big money to be made in the furniture business if you knew how to go about it. He, Scripps, knew all the wrinkles of that game. In his own mind it was settled. He would

stop at Grand Rapids. The little bird fluttered, happily now.

"Ah, what a beautiful gilded cage I'll build for you, my pretty one," Scripps said exultantly. The little bird pecked him confidently. Scripps strode on in the storm. The snow was beginning to drift across the track. Borne on the wind, there came to Scripps's ears the sound of a far-off Indian war-whoop.

CHAPTER FOUR

Where was Scripps now? Walking in the night in the storm, he had become confused. He had started for Chicago after that dreadful night when he had found that his home was a home no longer. Why had Lucy left? What had become of Lousy? He, Scripps, did not know. Not that he cared. That was all behind him. There was none of that now. He was standing knee-deep in snow in front of a railway station. On the railway station was written in big letters:

PETOSKEY

There were a pile of deer shipped down by hunters from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, lying piled the one on the other, dead and stiff and drifted half over with snow on the station platform. Scripps read the sign again. Could this be Petoskey?

A man was inside the station, tapping something back of a wicketed window. He looked out at Scripps. Could he be a telegrapher? Something told Scripps that he was.

He stepped out of the snow-drift and approached the window. Behind the window the man worked busily away at his telegrapher's key.

"Are you a telegrapher?" asked Scripps.

"Yes, sir," said the man. "I'm a telegrapher."

"How wonderful!"

The telegrapher eyed him suspiciously. After all, what was this man to him?

"Is it hard to be a telegrapher?" Scripps asked. He wanted to ask the man outright if this was Petoskey. He did not know this great northern section of America, though, and he wished to be polite.

The telegrapher looked at him curiously.

"Say," he asked, "are you a fairy?"

"No," Scripps said. "I don't know what being a fairy means."

"Well," said the telegrapher, "what do you carry a bird around for?"

"Bird?" asked Scripps. "What bird?"

"That bird that's sticking out of your shirt." Scripps was at a loss. What sort of chap was this telegrapher? What sort of men went in for telegraphy? Were they like composers? Were they like artists? Were they like writers? Were they like the advertising men who write the ads in our national weeklies? Or were they like Europeans, drawn and wasted by the war, their best years behind them? Could he tell this telegrapher the whole story? Would he understand?

"I started home," he began. "I passed the Mancelona High School—"

"I knew a girl in Mancelona," the telegrapher said. "Maybe you knew her. Ethel Enright."

It was no good going on. He would cut the story short. He would give the bare essentials. Besides, it was beastly cold. It was cold standing there on the wind-swept station platform. Something told him it was useless to go on. He looked over at the deer lying there in a pile, stiff and cold. Perhaps they, too, had been lovers. Some were bucks and some were does. The bucks had horns. That was how you could tell. With cats it is more difficult. In France they geld the cats and do not geld the horses. France was a long way off.

"My wife left me," Scripps said abruptly.

"I don't wonder if you go around with a damn bird sticking out of your shirt," the telegrapher said.

"What town is this?" Scripps asked. The single moment of spiritual communion they had had, had been dissipated. They had never really had it. But they might have. It was no use now. It was no use trying to capture what had gone. What had fled.

“Petoskey,” the telegrapher replied.

“Thank you,” Scripps said. He turned and walked into the silent, deserted Northern town. Luckily, he had four hundred and fifty dollars in his pocket. He had sold a story to George Horace Lorimer just before he had started out with his old woman on that drinking trip. Why had he gone at all? What was it all about, anyway?

Coming toward him down the street came two Indians. They looked at him, but their faces did not change. Their faces remained the same. They went into McCarthy’s barber shop.

CHAPTER FIVE

Scripps O'Neil stood irresolutely before the barber shop. Inside there men were being shaved. Other men, no different, were having their hair cut. Other men sat against the wall in tall chairs and smoked, awaiting their turn in the barber chairs, admiring the paintings hung on the wall, or admiring their own reflections in the long mirror. Should he, Scripps, go in there? After all, he had four hundred and fifty dollars in his pocket. He could go where he wanted. He looked, once again, irresolutely. It was an inviting prospect, the society of men, the warm room, the white jackets of the barbers skillfully snipping away with their scissors or drawing their blades diagonally through the lather that covered the face of some man who was getting a shave. They could use their tools, these barbers. Somehow, it wasn't what he wanted. He wanted something different. He wanted to eat. Besides, there was his bird to look after.

Scripps O'Neil turned his back on the barber shop and strode away up the street of the silently frozen Northern town. On his right, as he walked, the weeping birches, their branches bare of leaves, hung down to the ground, heavy with snow. To his ears came the sound of sleigh bells. Perhaps it was Christmas. In the South little children would be shooting off firecrackers and crying "Christmas Gift! Christmas Gift!" to one another. His father came from the South. He had been a soldier in the rebel army. 'Way back in Civil War days. Sherman had burned their house down on his March to the Sea. "War is hell," Sherman had said. "But you see how it is, Mrs. O'Neil. I've got to do it." He had touched a match to

the white-pillared old house.

"If General O'Neil were here, you dastard!" his mother had said, speaking in her broken English, "you'd never have touched a match to that house."

Smoke curled up from the old house. The fire was mounting. The white pillars were obscured in the rising smoke-wreaths. Scripps had held close to his mother's linsey-woolsey dress.

General Sherman climbed back onto his horse and made a low bow. "Mrs. O'Neil," he said, and Scripps's mother always said there were tears in his eyes, even if he was a damned Yank. The man had a heart, sir, even if he did not follow its dictates. "Mrs. O'Neil, if the general were here, we could have it out as man to man. As it is, ma'am, war being what it is, I must burn your house."

He motioned to one of his soldiers, who ran forward and threw a bucket of kerosene on the flames. The flames rose and a great column of smoke went up in the still evening air.

"At least, General Sherman," Scripps's mother said triumphantly, "that column of smoke will warn the other loyal daughters of the Confederacy that you are coming."

Sherman bowed. "That is the risk we must take, ma'am." He clapped spurs to his horse and rode away, his long white hair floating on the wind. Neither Scripps nor his mother ever saw him again. Odd that he should think of that incident now. He looked up. Facing him was a sign:

BROWN'S BEANERY THE BEST BY TEST

He would go in and eat. This was what he wanted. He would go in and eat. That sign:

THE BEST BY TEST

Ah, these big beanery owners were wise fellows. They knew how to get the customers. No ads in *The Saturday Evening Post* for them. THE BEST BY TEST. That was the stuff. He went in.

Inside the door of the beanery Scripps O'Neil looked around him. There was a long counter. There was a clock. There was a door

led into the kitchen. There were a couple of tables. There were a pile of doughnuts under a glass cover. There were signs put about on the wall advertising things one might eat. Was this, after all, Brown's Beanery?

"I wonder," Scripps asked an elderly waitress who came in through the swinging door from the kitchen, "if you could tell me if this is Brown's Beanery?"

"Yes, sir," answered the waitress. "The best by test."

"Thank you," Scripps said. He sat down at the counter. "I would like to have some beans for myself and some for my bird here."

He opened his shirt and placed the bird on the counter. The bird ruffled his feathers and shook himself. He pecked inquiringly at the catsup bottle. The elderly waitress put out a hand and stroked him. "Isn't he a manly little fellow?" she remarked. "By the way," she asked, a little shamefacedly, "what was it you ordered, sir?"

"Beans," Scripps said, "for my bird and myself."

The waitress shoved up a little wicket that led into the kitchen. Scripps had a glimpse of a warm, steam-filled room, with big pots and kettles, and many shining cans on the wall.

"A pig and the noisy ones," the waitress called in a matter-of-fact voice into the open wicket. "One for a bird!"

"On the fire!" a voice answered from the kitchen.

"How old is your bird?" the elderly waitress asked.

"I don't know," Scripps said. "I never saw him before last night. I was walking on the railroad track from Mancelona. My wife left me."

"Poor little chap," the waitress said. She poured a little catsup on her finger and the bird pecked at it gratefully.

"My wife left me," Scripps said. "We'd been out drinking on the railroad track. We used to go out evenings and watch the trains pass. I write stories. I had a story in *The Post* and two in *The Dial.* Mencken's trying to get ahold of me. I'm too wise for that sort of thing. No *politzei* for mine. They give me the *katzenjammers."*

What was he saying? He was talking wildly. This would never do. He must pull himself together.

"Scofield Thayer was my best man," he said. "I'm a Harvard man. All I want is for them to give me and my bird a square deal. No more *weltpolitik*. Take Dr. Coolidge away."

His mind was wandering. He knew what it was. He was faint with hunger. This Northern air was too sharp, too keen for him.

"I say," he said. "Could you let me have just a few of those beans. I don't like to rush things. I know when to let well enough alone."

The wicket came up, and a large plate of beans and a small plate of beans, both steaming, appeared.

"Here they are," the waitress said.

Scripps fell to on the large plate of beans. There was a little pork, too. The bird was eating happily, raising its head after each swallow to let the beans go down.

"He does that to thank God for those beans," the elderly waitress explained.

"They're mighty fine beans, too," Scripps agreed. Under the influence of the beans his head was clearing. What was this rot he had been talking about that man Henry Mencken? Was Mencken really after him? It wasn't a pretty prospect to face. He had four hundred and fifty dollars in his pocket. When that was gone he could always put an end to things. If they pressed him too far they would get a big surprise. He wasn't the man to be taken alive. Just let them try it.

After eating his beans the bird had fallen asleep. He was sleeping on one leg, the other leg tucked up into his feathers.

"When he gets tired of sleeping on that leg he will change legs and rest," the waitress remarked. "We had an old osprey at home that was like that."

"Where was your home?" Scripps asked.

"In England. In the Lake District." The waitress smiled a bit

wistfully. “Wordsworth’s country, you know.”

Ah, these English. They travelled all over the face of the globe. They were not content to remain in their little island. Strange Nordics, obsessed with their dream of empire.

“I was not always a waitress,” the elderly waitress remarked.

“I’m sure you weren’t.”

“Not half,” the waitress went on. “It’s rather a strange *story*. Perhaps it would bore you?”

“Not at all,” Scripps said. “You wouldn’t mind if I used the story sometime?”

“Not if you find it interesting,” the waitress smiled.

“You wouldn’t use my name, of course.”

“Not if you’d rather not,” Scripps said. “By the way, could I have another order of beans?”

“Best by test,” the waitress smiled. Her face was lined and gray. She looks a little like that actress that died in Pittsburgh. What was her name? Lenore Ulric. In *Peter Pan.* That was it. They say she always went about veiled, Scripps thought. There was an interesting woman. Was it Lenore Ulric? Perhaps not. No matter.

“You really want some more beans?” asked the waitress.

“Yes,” Scripps answered simply.

“Once again on the loud ones,” the waitress called into the wicket. “Layoff the bird.”

“On the fire,” came the response.

“Please go on with your story,” Scripps said kindly.

“It was the year of the Paris Exposition,” she began. “I was a young girl at the time, *une jeune fille,* and I came over from England with my mother. We were going to be present at the opening of the exposition. On our way from the Gare du Nord to the hotel in the Place Vendome where we lodged, we stopped at a coiffeur’s shop and made some trifling purchase. My mother, as I recall, purchased an additional bottle of ‘smelling salts,’ as you call them here in America.”

She smiled.

"Yes, go on. Smelling salts," Scripps said.

"We registered, as is customary, in the hotel, and were given the adjoining rooms we had reserved. My mother felt a bit done in by the trip, and we dined in our rooms. I was full of excitement about seeing the exposition on the morrow. But I was tired after the journey—we had had a rather nasty crossing—and slept soundly. In the morning I awoke and called for my mother. There was no answer, and I went into the room to waken Mummy. Instead of Mummy there was a French general in the bed."

"Mon Dieu!" Scripps said.

"I was terribly frightened," the waitress went on, "and rang the bell for the management. The concierge came up, and I demanded to know where my mother was.

"'But, mademoiselle,' the concierge explained, 'we know nothing about your mother. You came here with General So-and-so'—I cannot remember the general's name."

"Call him General Joffre," Scripps suggested.

"It was a name very like that," the waitress said. "I was fearfully frightened and sent for the police, and demanded to see the guest-register. 'You'll find there that I am registered with my mother,' I said. The police came and the concierge brought up the register. 'See, madame,' he said. 'You are registered with the general with whom you came to our hotel last night.'

"I was desperate. Finally, I remembered where the coiffeur's shop was. The police sent for the coiffeur. An agent of police brought him in.

"'I stopped at your shop with my mother,' I said to the coiffeur, 'and my mother bought a bottle of aromatic salts.'

"'I remember mademoiselle perfectly,' the coiffeur said. 'But you were not with your mother. You were with an elderly French general. He purchased, I believe, a pair of mustache tongs. My books, at any rate, will show the purchase.'

“I was in despair. In the meantime the police had brought in the cab driver who had brought us from the gare to the hotel. He swore that I had never been with my mother. Tell me, does this story bore you?”

“Go on,” said Scripps. “If you had ever been as hard up for plots as I have been!”

“Well,” the waitress said. “That’s all there is to the tale. I never saw my mother again. I communicated with the embassy, but they could do nothing. It was finally established by them that I had crossed the channel with my mother, but they could do nothing beyond that. “Tears came into the elderly waitress’s eyes. “I never saw Mummy again. Never again. Not even once.”

“What about the general?”

“He finally loaned me one hundred francs—not a great sum even in those days—and I came to America and became a waitress. That’s all there is to the story.”

“There’s more than that,” Scripps said. “I’d stake my life there’s more than that.”

“Sometimes, you know, I feel there is,” the waitress said. “I feel there must be more than that. Somewhere, somehow, there must be an explanation. I don’t know what brought the subject into my mind this morning.”

“It was a good thing to get it off your mind,” Scripps said.

“Yes,” the waitress smiled, the lines in her face not quite so deep now. “I feel better now.”

“Tell me,” Scripps asked the waitress. “Is there any work in this town for me and my bird?”

“Honest work?” asked the waitress. “I only know of honest work.”

“Yes, honest work,” Scripps said.

“They do say they’re hiring hands at the new pump-factory,” the waitress said. Why shouldn’t he work with his hands? Rodin had done it. Cezanne had been a butcher. Renoir a carpenter. Picasso

had worked in a cigarette-factory in his boyhood. Gilbert Stuart, who painted those famous portraits of Washington that are reproduced all over this America of ours and hang in every schoolroom-Gilbert Stuart had been a blacksmith. Then there was Emerson. Emerson had been a hod-carrier. James Russell Lowell had been, he had heard, a telegraph operator in his youth. Like that chap down at the station. Perhaps even now that telegrapher at the station was working on his "Thanatopsis" or his "To a Waterfowl." Why shouldn't he, Scripps O'Neil, work in a pump-factory?

"You'll come back again?" the waitress asked.

"If I may," Scripps said.

"And bring your bird."

"Yes," Scripps said. "The little chap's rather tired now. After all, it was a hard night for him."

"I should say it was," agreed the waitress.

Scripps went out again into the town. He felt clearheaded and ready to face life. A pump-factory would be interesting. Pumps were big things now. Fortunes were made and lost in pumps every day in New York in Wall Street. He knew of a chap who'd cleaned up a cool half-million on pumps in less than half an hour. They knew what they were about, these big Wall Street operators.

Outside on the street he looked up at the sign. BEST BY TEST, he read. They had the dope all right, he said. Was it true, though, that there had been a Negro cook? Just once, just for one moment, when the wicket went up, he thought he had caught a glimpse of something black. Perhaps the chap was only sooty from the stove.

PART TWO

The Struggle for Life

And here I solemnly protest I have no intention to vilify or asperse anyone; for though everything is copied from the book if nature, and scarce a character or action produced which I have not taken from my own observations or experience; yet I have used the utmost care to obscure the persons by such different circumstances, degrees, and colors, that it will be impossible to guess at them with any degree of certainty; and if it ever happens otherwise, it is only where the failure characterized is so minute, that it is a foible only which the party himself may laugh at as well as any other.

HENRY FIELDING

CHAPTER SIX

Scripps O'Neil was looking for employment. It would be good to work with his hands. He walked down the street away from the beanery and past McCarthy's barber shop. He did not go into the barber shop. It looked as inviting as ever, but it was employment Scripps wanted. He turned sharply around the corner of the barber shop and onto the Main Street of Petoskey. It was a handsome, broad street, lined on either side with brick and pressed-stone buildings. Scripps walked along it toward the part of town where the pump-factory stood. At the door of the pump-factory he was embarrassed. Could this really be the pump-factory? True, a stream of pumps were being carried out and set up in the snow, and workmen were throwing pails of water over them to encase them in a coating of ice that would protect them from the winter winds as well as any paint would. But were they really pumps? It might all be a trick. These pump men were clever fellows.

"I say!" Scripps beckoned to one of the workmen who was sloshing water over a new, raw-looking pump that had just been carried out and stood protestingly in the snow. "Are they pumps?"

"They will be in time," the workman said.

Scripps knew it was the factory. They weren't going to fool him on that. He walked up to the door. There was a sign on it:

KEEP OUT. THIS MEANS YOU

Can that mean me? Scripps wondered. He knocked on the door and went in.

"I'd like to speak to the manager," he said, standing quietly in the half-light.

Workmen were passing him, carrying the new raw pumps on their shoulders. They hummed snatches of songs as they passed. The handles of the pumps flopped stiffly in dumb protest. Some pumps had no handles. They perhaps, after all, are the lucky ones, Scripps thought. A little man came up to him. He was well-built, short, with wide shoulders and a grim face.

"You were asking for the manager?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'm the foreman here. What I say goes."

"Can you hire and fire?" Scripps asked.

"I can do one as easily as the other," the foreman said.

"I want a job."

"Any experience?"

"Not in pumps."

"All right," the foreman said. "We'll put you on piecework. Here, Yogi," he called to one of the men, who was standing looking out of the window of the factory, "show this new chum where to stow his swag and how to find his way around these diggings." The foreman looked Scripps up and down. "I'm an Australian," he said. "Hope you'll like the lay here." He walked off.

The man called Yogi Johnson came over from the window. "Glad to meet you," he said. He was a chunky, well-built fellow. One of the sort you see around almost anywhere. He looked as though he had been through things.

"Your foreman's the first Australian I've ever met," Scripps said.

"Oh, he's not an Australian," Yogi said. "He was just with the Australians once during the war, and it made a big impression on him."

"Were you in the war?" Scripps asked.

"Yes," Yogi Johnson said. "I was the first man to go from Cadillac."

"It must have been quite an experience."

"It's meant a lot to me," Yogi answered. "Come on and I'll show

you around the works."

Scripps followed this man, who showed him through the pump-factory. It was dark but warm inside the pump-factory. Men naked to the waist took the pumps in huge tongs as they came trundling by on an endless chain, culling out the misfits and placing the perfect pumps on another endless chain that carried them up into the cooling room. Other men, Indians for the most part, wearing only breech-clouts, broke up the misfit pumps with huge hammers and adzes and rapidly recast them into axe heads, wagon springs, trombone slides, bullet moulds, all the by-products of a big pump-factory. There was nothing wasted, Yogi pointed out. A group of Indian boys, humming to themselves one of the old tribal chanties, squatted in a corner of the big forging room shaping the little fragments that were chipped from the pumps in casting, into safety razor blades.

"They work naked," Yogi said. "They're searched as they go out. Sometimes they try and conceal the razor blades and take them out with them to bootleg."

"There must be quite a loss that way," Scripps said.

"Oh, no," Yogi answered. "The inspectors get most of them."

Upstairs, apart in a separate room, two old men were working. Yogi opened the door. One of the old men looked over his steel spectacles and frowned.

"You make a draft," he said.

"Shut the door," the other old man said, in the high, complaining voice of the very old.

"They're our two hand-workers," Yogi said. "They make all the pumps the manufactory sends out to the big international pump races. You remember our Peerless Pounder that won the pump race in Italy, where Franky Dawson was killed?"

"I read about it in the paper," Scripps answered.

"Mr. Borrow, over there in the corner, made the Peerless Pounder all himself by hand," Yogi said.

“I carved it direct from the steel with this knife.” Mr. Borrow held up a short-bladed, razorlike-looking knife. “Took me eighteen months to get it right.”

“The Peerless Pounder was quite a pump all right,” the high-voiced little old man said. “But we’re working on one now that will show its heels to any of them foreign pumps, aren’t we, Henry?”

“That’s Mr. Shaw,” Yogi said in an undertone. “He’s probably the greatest living pump-maker.”

“You boys get along and leave us alone,” Mr. Borrow. said. He was carving away steadily, his infirm old hands shaking a little between strokes.

“Let the boys watch,” Mr. Shaw said. “Where you from, young feller?”

“I’ve just come from Mancelona,” Scripps answered. “My wife left me.”

“Well, you won’t have no difficulty finding another one,” Mr. Shaw said. “You’re a likely-looking young feller. But take my advice and take your time. A poor wife ain’t much better than no wife at all.”

“I wouldn’t say that, Henry,” Mr. Borrow remarked in his high voice. “Any wife at all’s a pretty good wife the way things are going now.”

“You take my advice, young feller, and go slow. Get yourself a good one this time.”

“Henry knows a thing or two,” Mr. Borrow said. “He knows what he’s talking about there.” He laughed a high, cackling laugh. Mr. Shaw, the old pump-maker, blushed.

“You boys get along and leave us get on with our pump-making,” he said. “Henry and me here, we got a sight of work to do.”

“I’m very glad to have met you,” Scripps said.

“Come on,” Yogi said. “I better get you started or the foreman will be on my tail.”

He put Scripps to work collaring pistons in the piston-collaring room. There Scripps worked for almost a year. In some ways it was the happiest year of his life. In other ways it was a nightmare. A hideous nightmare. In the end he grew to like it. In other ways he hated it. Before he knew it, a year had passed. He was still collaring pistons. But what strange things had happened in that year. Often he wondered about them. As he wondered, collaring a piston now almost automatically, he listened to the laughter that came up from below, where the little Indian lads were shaping what were to be razor blades. As he listened something rose in his throat and almost choked him

CHAPTER SEVEN

That night, after his first day in the pump-factory, the first day in what was or were to become an endless succession of days of dull piston-collaring, Scripps went again to the beanery to eat. All day he had kept his bird concealed. Something told him that the pump-factory was not the place to bring his bird out in. During the day the bird had several times made him uncomfortable, but he had adjusted his clothes to it and even cut a little slit the bird could poke his beak out through in search of fresh air. Now the day's work was over. It was finished. Scripps on his way to the beanery. Scripps happy that he was working with his hands. Scripps thinking of the old pump-makers. Scripps going to the society of the friendly waitress. Who was that waitress, anyway? What was it had happened to her in Paris? He must find out more about this Paris. Yogi Johnson had been there. He would quiz Yogi. Get him to talk. Draw him out. Make him tell what he knew. He knew a trick or two about that.

Watching the sunset out over the Petoskey Harbor, the lake now frozen and great blocks of ice jutting up over the breakwater, Scripps strode down the streets of Petoskey to the beanery. He would have liked to ask Yogi Johnson to eat with him, but he didn't dare. Not yet. That would come later. All in good time. No need to rush matters with a man like Yogi. Who was Yogi, anyway? Had he really been in the war? What had the war meant to him? Was he really the first man to enlist from Cadillac? Where was Cadillac, anyway? Time would tell.

Scripps O'Neil opened the door and went into the beanery. The

elderly waitress got up from the chair where she had been reading the overseas edition of *The Manchester Guardian,* and put the paper and her steelrimmed spectacles on top of the cash register.

"Good evening," she said simply. "It's good to have *you* back,"

Something stirred inside Scripps O'Neil. A feeling that he could not define came within him.

"I've been working all day long"—he looked at the elderly waitress—"for *you,"* he added.

"How lovely!" she said. And then smiled shyly. "And I have been working all day long—for *you."*

Tears came into Scripps's eyes. Something stirred inside him again. He reached forward to take the elderly waitress's hand, and with quiet dignity she laid it within his own. "You are my woman," he said. Tears came into her eyes, too.

"You are my man," she said.

"Once again I say: you are my woman." Scripps pronounced the words solemnly. Something had broken inside him again. He felt he could not keep from crying.

"Let this be our wedding ceremony," the elderly waitress said. Scripps pressed her hand. "You are my woman," he said simply.

"You are my man and more than my man." She looked into his eyes. "You are all of America to me."

"Let us go," Scripps said.

"Have you your bird?" asked the waitress, laying aside her apron and folding the copy of *The Manchester Guardian Weekly.* "I'll bring *The Guardian,* if you don't mind," she said, wrapping the paper in her apron. "It's a new paper and I've not read it yet."

"I'm very fond of *The Guardian,"* Scripps said. "My family have taken it ever since I can remember. My father was a great admirer of Gladstone."

"My father went to Eton with Gladstone," the elderly waitress said. "And now I am ready."

She had donned a coat and stood ready, her apron, her steel-

rimmed spectacles in their worn black morocco case, her copy of *The Manchester Guardian* held in her hand.

"Have you no hat?" asked Scripps.

"No."

"Then I will buy you one," Scripps said tenderly.

"It will be your wedding gift," the elderly waitress said. Again there were tears shone in her eyes.

"And now let us go," Scripps said.

The elderly waitress came out from behind the counter, and together, hand in hand, they strode out into the night.

Inside the beanery the black cook pushed up the wicket and looked through from the kitchen. "Dey've gone off," he chuckled. "Gone off into de night. Well, well, well." He closed the wicket softly. Even he was a little impressed.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Half an hour later Scripps O'Neil and the elderly waitress returned to the beanery as man and wife. The beanery looked much the same. There was the long counter, the salt cellars, the sugar containers, the catsup bottle, the Worcestershire Sauce bottle. There was the wicket that led into the kitchen. Behind the counter was the relief waitress. She was a buxom, jolly-looking girl, and she wore a white apron. At the counter, reading a Detroit paper, sat a drummer. The drummer was eating a T-bone steak and hashed-brown potatoes. Something very beautiful had happened to Scripps and the elderly waitress. Now they were hungry. They wished to eat.

The elderly waitress looking at Scripps. Scripps looking at the elderly waitress. The drummer reading his paper and occasionally putting a little catsup on his hashed-brown potatoes. The other waitress, Mandy, back of the counter in her freshly starched white apron. The frost on the windows. The warmth inside. The cold outside. Scripps's bird, rather rumpled now, sitting on the counter and preening his feathers.

"So you've come back," Mandy the waitress said. "The cook said you had gone out into the night."

The elderly waitress looked at Mandy, her eyes brightened, her voice calm and now of a deeper, richer timbre.

"We are man and wife now," she said kindly. "We have just been married. What would you like to eat for supper, Scripps, dear?"

"I don't know," Scripps said. He felt vaguely uneasy. Something

was stirring within him.

"Perhaps you have eaten enough of the beans, dear Scripps," the elderly waitress, now his wife, said. The drummer looked up from his paper. Scripps noticed that it was the Detroit *News.* There was a fine paper.

"That's a fine paper you're reading," Scripps said to the drummer.

"It's a good paper, the *News,"* the drummer said. "You two on your honeymoon?"

"Yes," Mrs. Scripps said; "we are man and wife now."

"Well," said the drummer, "that's a mighty fine thing to be. I'm a married man myself."

"Are you?" said Scripps. "My wife left me. It was in Mancelona. "

"Don't let's talk of that any more, Scripps, dear," Mrs. Scripps said. "You've told that story so many times."

"Yes, dear," Scripps agreed. He felt vaguely mistrustful of himself. Something, somewhere was stirring inside of him. He looked at the waitress called Mandy, standing robust and vigorously lovely in her newly starched white apron. He watched her hands, healthy, calm, capable hands, doing the duties of her waitresshood.

"Try one of these T-bones with hashed-brown potatoes," the drummer suggested. "They got a nice T-bone here."

"Would you like one, dear?" Scripps asked his wife.

"I'll just take a bowl of milk and crackers," the elderly Mrs. Scripps said. "You have whatever you want, dear."

"Here's your crackers and milk, Diana," Mandy said, placing them on the counter. "Do you want a T-bone, sir?"

"Yes," Scripps said. Something stirred again within him.

"Well done or rare?"

"Rare, please."

The waitress turned and called into the wicket: "Tea for one. Let it go raw!"

"Thank you," Scripps said. He eyed the waitress Mandy. She had a gift for the picturesque in speech, that girl. It had been that very picturesque quality in her speech that had first drawn him to his present wife. That and her strange background. England, the Lake Country. Scripps striding through the Lake Country with Wordsworth. A field of golden daffodils. The wind blowing at Windermere. Far off, perhaps, a stag at bay. Ah, that was farther north, in Scotland. They were a hardy race, those Scots, deep in their mountain fastnesses. Harry Lauder and his pipe. The Highlanders in the Great War. Why had not he, Scripps, been in the war? That was where that chap Yogi Johnson had it on him. The war would have meant much to him, Scripps. Why hadn't he been in it? Why hadn't he heard of it in time? Perhaps he was too old. Look at that old French General Joffre, though. Surely he was a younger man than that old general. General Foch praying for victory. The French troops kneeling along the Chemin des Dames, praying for victory. The Germans with their *"Gott mit uns."* What a mockery. Surely he was no older than that French General Foch. He wondered.

Mandy, the waitress, placed his T-bone steak and hashed-brown potatoes on the counter before him. As she laid the plate down, just for an instant, her hand touched his. Scripps felt a strange thrill go through him. Life was before him. He was not an old man. Why were there no wars now? Perhaps there were. Men were fighting in China, Chinamen, Chinamen killing one another. What for? Scripps wondered. What was it all about, anyway?

Mandy, the buxom waitress, leaned forward. "Say," she said, "did I ever tell you about the last words of Henry James?"

"Really, dear Mandy," Mrs. Scripps said, "you've told that story rather often."

"Let's hear it," Scripps said. "I'm very interested in Henry James." Henry James, Henry James. That chap who had gone away from his own land to live in England among Englishmen. Why had

he done it? For what had he left America? Weren't his roots here? His brother William. Boston. Pragmatism. Harvard University. Old John Harvard with silver buckles on his shoes. Charley Brickley. Eddie Mahan. Where were they now?

"Well," Mandy began, "Henry James became a British subject on his death-bed. At once, as soon as the king heard Henry James had become a British subject he sent around the highest decoration in his power to bestow—the Order of Merit."

"The O. M.," the elderly Mrs. Scripps explained.

"That was it," the waitress said. "Professors Gosse and Saintsbury came with the man who brought the decoration. Henry James was lying on his death-bed, and his eyes were shut. There was a single candle on a table beside the bed. The nurse allowed them to come near the bed, and they put the ribbon of the decoration around James's neck, and the decoration lay on the sheet over Henry James's chest. Professors Gosse and Saintsbury leaned forward and smoothed the ribbon of the decoration. Henry James never opened his eyes. The purse told them they all must go out of the room, and they all went out of the room. When they were all gone, Henry James spoke to the nurse. He never opened his eyes. 'Nurse,' Henry James said, 'put out the candle, nurse, and spare my blushes.' Those were the last words he ever spoke."

"James was quite a writer," Scripps O'Neil said. He was strangely moved by the story.

"You don't always tell it the same way, dear," Mrs. Scripps remarked to Mandy. There were tears in Mandy's eyes. "I feel very strongly about Henry James," she said.

"What was the matter with James?" asked the drummer. "Wasn't America good enough for him?"

Scripps O'Neil was thinking about Mandy, the waitress. What a background she must have, that girl! What a fund of anecdotes! A chap could go far with a woman like that to help him! He stroked the little bird that sat on the lunch-counter before him. The bird

pecked at his finger. Was the little bird a hawk? A falcon, perhaps, from one of the big Michigan falconries. Was it perhaps a robin? Pulling and tugging at the early worm on some green lawn somewhere? He wondered.

"What do you call your bird?" the drummer asked.

"I haven't named him yet. What would you call him?"

"Why not call him Ariel?" Mandy asked.

"Or Puck," Mrs. Scripps put in.

"What's it mean?" asked the drummer.

"It's a character out of Shakespeare," Mandy explained.

"Oh, give the bird a chance."

"What would you call him?" Scripps turned to the drummer.

"He ain't a parrot, is he?" asked the drummer. "If he was a parrot you could call him Polly."

"There's a character in 'The Beggar's Opera' called Polly," Mandy explained.

Scripps wondered. Perhaps the bird was a parrot. A parrot strayed from some comfortable home with some old maid. The untilled soil of some New England spinster.

"Better wait till you see how he turns out," the drummer advised. "You got plenty of time to name him."

This drummer had sound ideas. He, Scripps, did not even know what sex the bird was. Whether he was a boy bird or a girl bird.

"Wait till you see if he lays eggs," the drummer suggested. Scripps looked into the drummer's eyes. The fellow had voiced his own unspoken thought.

"You know a thing or two, drummer," he said.

"Well," the drummer admitted modestly, "I ain't drummed all these years for nothing."

"You're right there, pal," Scripps said.

"That's a nice bird you got there, brother," the drummer said. "You want to hang onto that bird."

Scripps knew it. Ah, these drummers know a thing or two. Going

up and down over the face of this great America of ours. These drummers kept their eyes open. They were no fools.

"Listen," the drummer said. He pushed his derby hat off his brow and, leaning forward, spat into the tall brass cuspidor that stood beside his stool. "I want to tell you about a pretty beautiful thing that happened to me once in Bay City."

Mandy, the waitress, leaned forward. Mrs. Scripps leaned toward the drummer to hear better. The drummer looked apologetically at Scripps and stroked the bird with his forefinger.

"Tell you about it some other time, brother," he said. Scripps understood. From out of the kitchen, through the wicket in the hall, came a high-pitched, haunting laugh. Scripps listened. Could that be the laughter of the Negro? He wondered.

CHAPTER NINE

Scripps going slowly to work in the pump-factory in the mornings. Mrs. Scripps looking out of the window and watching him go up the street. Not much time for reading *The Guardian* now. Not much time for reading about English politics. Not much time for worrying about the cabinet crises over there in France. The French were a strange people. Joan of Arc. Eva le Gallienne. Clemenceau. Georges Carpentier. Sacha Guitry. Yvonne Printemps. Grock. Les Fratellinis. Gilbert Seldes. *The Dial. The Dial* Prize. Marianne Moore. E. E. Cummings. *The Enormous Room. Vanity Fair.* Frank Crowninshield. What was it all about? Where was it taking her?

She had a man now. A man of her own. For her own. Could she keep him? Could she hold him for her own? She wondered.

Mrs. Scripps, formerly an elderly waitress, now the wife of Scripps O'Neil, with a good job in the pump-factory. Diana Scripps. Diana was her own name. It had been her mother's, too. Diana Scripps looking into the mirror and wondering could she hold him. It was getting to be a question. Why had he ever met Mandy? Would she have the courage to break off going to the restaurant with Scripps to eat? She couldn't do that. He would go alone. She knew that. It was no use trying to pull wool over her own eyes. He would go alone and he would talk with Mandy. Diana looked into the mirror. Could she hold him? Could she hold him? That thought never left her now.

Every night at the restaurant, she couldn't call it a beanery now —that made a lump come in her throat and made her throat feel hard and choky. Every night at the restaurant now Scripps and

Mandy talked together. The girl was trying to take him away. Him, her Scripps. Trying to take him away. Take him away. Could she, Diana, hold him?

She was no better than a slut, that Mandy. Was that the way to do? Was that the thing to do? Go after another woman's man? Come between man and wife? Break up a home? And all with these interminable literary reminiscences. These endless anecdotes. Scripps was fascinated by Mandy. Diana admitted that to herself. But she might hold him. That was all that mattered now. To hold him. To hold him. Not to let him go. Make him stay. She looked into the mirror.

Diana subscribing for *The Forum.* Diana reading *The Mentor.* Diana reading William Lyon Phelps in *Scribner's.* Diana walking through the frozen streets of the silent Northern town to the Public Library, to read *The Literary Digest* "Book Review." Diana waiting for the postman to come, bringing *The Bookman.* Diana, in the snow, waiting for the postman to bring *The Saturday Review of Literature.* Diana, bareheaded now, standing in the mounting snowdrifts, waiting for the postman to bring her the *New York Times* "Literary Section." Was it doing any good? Was it holding him?

At first it seemed to be. Diana learned editorials by John Farrar by heart. Scripps brightened. A little of the old light shining in Scripps's eyes now. Then it died. Some little mistake in the wording, some slip in her understanding of a phrase, some divergence in her attitude, made it all ring false. She would go on. She was not beaten. He was her man and she would hold him. She looked away from the window and slit open the covering of the magazine that lay on her table. It was *Harper's Magazine. Harper's Magazine* in a new format. *Harper's Magazine* completely changed and revised. Perhaps that would do the trick. She wondered.

CHAPTER TEN

Spring was coming. Spring was in the air. (Author's Note.—This is the same day on which the story starts, back on page three.) A chinook wind was blowing. Work men were coming home from the factory. Scripps's bird singing in its cage. Diana looking out of the open window. Diana watching for her Scripps to come up the street. Could she hold him? Could she hold him? If she couldn't hold him, would he leave her his bird? She had felt lately that she couldn't hold him. In the nights, now, when she touched Scripps he rolled away, not toward her. It was a little sign, but life was made up of little signs. She felt she couldn't hold him. As she looked out of the window, a copy of *The Century Magazine* dropped from her nerveless hand. *The Century* had a new editor. There were more woodcuts. Glenn Frank had gone to head some great university somewhere. There were more Van Dorens on the magazine. Diana felt that might turn the trick. Happily she had opened *The Century* and read all morning. Then the wind, the warm chinook wind, had started to blow, and she knew Scripps would soon be home. Men were coming down the street in increasing numbers. Was Scripps among them? She did not like to put on her spectacles to look. She wanted Scripps's first glimpse of her to be of her at her best. As she felt him drawing nearer, the confidence she had had in *The Century* grew fainter. She had so hoped that would give her the something which would hold him. She wasn't sure now.

Scripps coming down the street with a crowd of excited workmen. Men stirred by the spring. Scripps swinging his lunch-bucket. Scripps waving good-by to the workmen, who trooped one

by one into what had formerly been a saloon. Scripps not looking up at the window. Scripps coming up the stairs. Scripps coming nearer. Scripps coming nearer. Scripps here.

"Good afternoon, dear Scripps," she said. "I've been reading a story by Ruth Suckow."

"Hello, Diana," Scripps answered. He set down his lunch-pail. She looked worn and old. He could afford to be polite.

"What was the story about, Diana?" he asked.

"It was about a little girl in Iowa," Diana said. She moved toward him. "It was about people on the land. It reminded me a little of my own Lake Country."

"That so?" asked Scripps. In some ways the pump-factory had hardened him. His speech had become more clipped. More like these hardy Northern workers'. But his mind was the same.

"Would you like me to read a little of it out loud?" Diana asked. "They're some lovely woodcuts."

"How about going down to the beanery?" Scripps said.

"As you wish, dear," Diana said. Then her voice broke. "I wish—oh, I wish you'd never seen that place!" She wiped away her tears. Scripps had not even seen them. "I'll bring the bird, dear," Diana said. "He hasn't been out all day."

Together they went down the street to the beanery. They did not walk hand in hand now. They walked like what are called old married people. Mrs. Scripps carried the bird-cage. The bird was happy in the warm wind. Men lurching along, drunk with the spring, passed them. Many spoke to Scripps. He was well known and well liked in the town now. Some, as they lurched by, raised their hats to Mrs. Scripps. She responded vaguely. If I can only hold him, she was thinking. If I can only hold him. As they walked along the slushy snow of the narrow sidewalk of the Northern town, something began to beat in her head. Perhaps it was the rhythm of their walking together. I can't hold him. I can't hold him. I can't hold him.

Scripps took her arm as they crossed the street. When his hand touched her arm Diana knew it was true. She would never hold him. A group of Indians passed them on the street. Were they laughing at her or was it some tribal jest? Diana didn't know. All she knew was that rhythm that beat into her brain. I can't hold him. I can't hold him.

Author's Note:

For the reader, not the printer. What difference does it make to the printer? Who is the printer, anyway? Gutenberg. The Gutenberg Bible. Caxton. Twelve-point open-face Caslon. The linotype machine. The author as a little boy being sent to look for type lice. The author as a young man being sent for the key to the forms. Ah, they knew a trick or two, these printers.

(In case the reader is becoming confused, we are now up to where the story opened with Yogi Johnson and Scripps O'Neil in the pump-factory itself, with the Chinook wind blowing. As you see, Scripps O'Neil has now come out of the pump-factory and is on his way to the beanery with his wife, who is afraid she cannot hold him. Personally, we don't believe she can, but the reader will see for himself. We will now leave the couple on their way to the beanery and go back and take up Yogi Johnson. We want the reader to like Yogi Johnson. The story will move a little faster from now on, in case any of the readers are tiring. We will also try and work in a number of good anecdotes. Would it be any violation of confidence if we told the reader that we get the best of these anecdotes from Mr. Ford Madox Ford? We owe him our thanks, and we hope the reader does, too. At any rate, we will now go on with Yogi Johnson. Yogi Johnson, the reader may remember, is the chap who was in the war. As the story opens, he is just coming out of the pump-factory. (See page three.)

It is very hard to write this way, beginning things backward, and the author hopes the reader will realize this and not grudge this little word of explanation. I know I would be very glad to read

anything the reader ever wrote, and I hope the reader will make the same sort of allowances. If any of the readers would care to send me anything they ever wrote, for criticism or advice, I am always at the Cafe du Dome any afternoon, talking about Art with Harold Stearns and Sinclair Lewis, and the reader can bring his stuff along with him; or he can send it to me care of my bank, if I have a bank. Now, if the reader is ready—and understand, I don't want to rush the reader any—we will go back to Yogi Johnson. But please remember that, while we have gone back to Yogi Johnson, Scripps O'Neil and his wife are on their way to the beanery. What will happen to them there I don't know. I only wish the reader could help me.)

PART THREE

Men in War and the Death of Society

It may be likewise noted that affectation does not imply an absolute negation of those qualities which are affected; and therefore, though, when it proceeds from hypocrisy, it be nearly allied to deceit; yet when it comes from vanity only, it partakes of the nature of ostentation: for instance, the affectation of liberality in a vain man differs visibly from the same affectation in the avaricious, for though the vain man is not what he would appear, or hath not the virtue he affects, to the degree he would be thought to have it; yet it sits less awkwardly on him than on the avaricious man, who is the very reverse of what he would seem to be.

HENRY FIELDING

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Yogi Johnson walked out of the workmen's entrance of the pump-factory and down the street. Spring was in the air. The snow was melting, and the gutters were running with snow-water. Yogi Johnson walked down the middle of the street, keeping on the as yet unmelted ice. He turned to the left and crossed the bridge over Bear River. The ice had already melted in the river and he watched the swirling brown current. Below, beside the stream, buds on the willow brush were coming out green.

It's a real chinook wind, Yogi thought. The foreman did right to let the men go. It wouldn't be safe. Keeping them in a day like this. Anything might happen. The owner of the factory knew a thing or two. When the Chinook blew, the thing to do was to get the men out of the factory. Then, if any of them were injured, it was not on him. He didn't get caught under the Employer's Liability Act. They knew a thing or two, these big pump-manufacturers. They were smart, all right.

Yogi was worried. There was something on his mind. It was spring, there was no doubt of that now, and he did not want a woman. He had worried about it a lot lately. There was no question about it. He did not want a woman. He couldn't explain it to himself. He had gone to the Public Library and asked for a book the night before. He looked at the librarian. He did not want her. Somehow, she meant nothing to him. At the restaurant where he had a meal ticket he looked hard at the waitress who brought him his meals. He did not want her, either. He passed a group of girls on their way home from high school. He looked carefully at all of

them. He did not want a single one. Decidedly something was wrong. Was he going to pieces? Was this the end?

Well, Yogi thought, women are gone, perhaps, though I hope not; but I still have my love of horses. He was walking up the steep hill that leads up from the Bear River out onto the Charlevoix road. The road was not really so steep, but it felt steep to Yogi, his legs heavy with the spring. In front of him was a grain and feed store. A team of beautiful horses were hitched in front of the feed store. Yogi went up to them. He wanted to touch them. To reassure himself that there was something left. The nigh horse looked at him as he came near. Yogi put his hand in his pocket for a lump of sugar. He had no sugar. The horse put its ears back and showed its teeth. The other horse jerked its head away. Was this all that his love of horses had brought him? After all, perhaps there was something wrong with these horses. Perhaps they had glanders or spavin. Perhaps something had been caught in the tender frog of their hoof. Perhaps they were lovers.

Yogi walked on up the hill and turned to the left onto the Charlevoix road. He passed the last houses of the outskirts of Petoskey and came out onto the open country road. On his right was a field that stretched to Little Traverse Bay. The blue of the bay opening out into the big Lake Michigan. Across the bay the pine hills behind Harbor Springs. Beyond, where you could not see it, Cross Village, where the Indians lived. Even further beyond, the Straits of Mackinac with St. Ignace, where a strange and beautiful thing had once happened to Oscar Gardner, who worked beside Yogi in the pump-factory. Further beyond, the Soo, both Canadian and American. There the wilder spirits of Petoskey sometimes went to drink beer. They were happy then. ‘Way, ‘way beyond, and, in the other direction, at the foot of the lake was Chicago, where Scripps O’Neil had started for on that eventful night when his first marriage had become a marriage no longer. Near there Gary, Indiana, where were the great steel mills. Near there Hammond,

Indiana. Near there Michigan City, Indiana. Further beyond, there would be Indianapolis, Indiana, where Booth Tarkington lived. He had the wrong dope, that fellow. Further down there would be Cincinnati, Ohio. Beyond that, Vicksburg, Mississippi. Beyond that, Waco, Texas. Ah! there was grand sweep to this America of ours.

Yogi walked across the road and sat down on a pile of logs, where he could look out over the lake. After all, the war was over and he was still alive.

There was a chap in that fellow Anderson's book that the librarian had given him at the library last night. Why hadn't he wanted the librarian, anyway? Could it be because he thought she might have false teeth? Could it be something else? Would a little child ever tell her? He didn't know. What was the librarian to him, anyway?

This chap in the book by Anderson. He had been a soldier, too. He had been at the front two years, Anderson said. What was his name? Fred Something. This Fred had thoughts dancing in his brain —horror. One night, in the time of the fighting, he went out on parade—no, it was patrol—in No Man's Land, and saw another man stumbling along in the darkness and shot him. The man pitched forward dead. It had been the only time Fred consciously killed a man. You don't kill men in war much, the book said. The hell you don't, Yogi thought, if you're two years in the infantry at the front. They just die. Indeed they do, Yogi thought. Anderson said the act was rather hysterical on Fred's part. He and the men with him might have made the fellow surrender. They had all got the jimjams. After it happened they all ran away together. Where the hell did they run to? Yogi wondered. Paris?

Afterward, killing this man haunted Fred. It's got to be sweet and true. That was the way the soldiers thought, Anderson said. The hell it was. This Fred was supposed to have been two years in an infantry regiment at the front.

A couple of Indians were passing along the road, grunting to

themselves and to each other. Yogi called to them. The Indians came over.

"Big white chief got chew of tobacco?" asked the first Indian.

"White chief carry liquor?" the second Indian asked.

Yogi handed them a package of Peerless and his pocket flask.

"White chief heap big medicine," the Indians grunted.

"Listen," Yogi Johnson said. "I am about to address to you a few remarks about the war. A subject on which I feel very deeply." The Indians sat down on the logs. One of the Indians pointed at the sky. "Up there gitchy Manitou the Mighty," he said.

The other Indian winked at Yogi. "White chief no believe every goddam thing he hear," he grunted.

"Listen," Yogi Johnson said. And he told them about the war.

War hadn't been that way to Yogi, he told the Indians. War had been to him like football. American football. What they play at the colleges. Carlisle Indian School. Both the Indians nodded. They had been to Carlisle.

Yogi had played centre at football and war had been much the same thing, intensely unpleasant. When you played football and had the ball, you were down with your legs spread out and the ball held out in front of you on the ground; you had to listen for the signal, decode it, and make the proper pass. You had to think about it all the time. While your hands were on the ball the opposing centre stood in front of you, and when you passed the ball he brought his hand up smash into your face and grabbed you with the other hand under the chin or under your armpit, and tried to pull you forward or shove you back to make a hole he could go through and break up the play. You were supposed to charge forward so hard you banged him out of the play with your body and put you both on the ground. He had all the advantage. It was not what you would call fun. When you had the ball he had all the advantage. The only good thing was that when he had the ball you could rough-house *him.* In this way things evened up and sometimes even

a certain tolerance was achieved. Football, like the war, was unpleasant; stimulating and exciting after you had attained a certain hardness, and the chief difficulty had been that of remembering the signals. Yogi was thinking about the war, not the army. He meant combat. The army was something different. You could take it and ride with it or you could buck the tiger and let it smash you. The army was a silly business, but the war was different.

Yogi was not haunted by men he had killed. He knew he had killed five men. Probably he had killed more. He didn't believe men you killed haunted you. Not if you had been two years at the front. Most of the men he had known had been excited as hell when they had first killed. The trouble was to keep them from killing too much. It was hard to get prisoners back to the people that wanted them for identification. You sent a man back with two prisoners; maybe you sent two men back with four prisoners. What happened? The men came back and said the prisoners were knocked out by the barrage. They would give the prisoner a poke in the seat of the pants with a bayonet, and when the prisoner jumped they would say, "You would run, you son of a bitch," and let their gun off in the back of his head. They wanted to be sure they had killed. Also they didn't want to go back through any damn barrage. No, sir. They learned those kind of manners from the Australians. After all, what were those Jerries? A bunch of goddam Huns. "Huns" sounded like a funny word now. All this sweetness and truth. Not if you were in there two years. In the end they would have softened. Got sorry for excesses and begun to store up good deeds against getting killed themselves. But that was the fourth phase of soldiering, the gentling down.

In a good soldier in the war it went like this: First, you were brave because you didn't think anything could hit you, because you yourself were something special, and you knew that you could never die. Then you found out different. You were really scared

then, but if you were a good soldier you functioned the same as before. Then, after you were wounded and not killed, with new men coming on, and going through your old processes, you hardened and became a good hard-boiled soldier. Then came the second crack, which is much worse than the first, and then you began doing good deeds, and being the boy Sir Philip Sidney, and storing up treasures in heaven. At the same time, of course, functioning always the same as before. As if it were a football game.

Nobody had any damn business to write about it, though, that didn't at least know about it from hearsay. Literature has too strong an effect on people's minds. Like this American writer Willa Cather, who wrote a book about the war where all the last part of it was taken from the action in the *Birth of a Nation,* and ex-servicemen wrote to her from all over America to tell her how much they liked it.

One of the Indians was asleep. He had been chewing tobacco, and his mouth was pursed up in sleep. He was leaning on the other Indian's shoulder. The Indian who was awake pointed at the other Indian, who was asleep, and shook his head.

"Well, how did you like the speech?" Yogi asked the Indian who was awake.

"White chief have heap much sound ideas," the Indian said. "White chief educated like hell."

"Thank you," Yogi said. He felt touched. Here among the simple aborigines, the only real Americans, he had found that true communion. The Indian looked at him, holding the sleeping Indian carefully that his head might not fall back upon the snow-covered logs.

"Was white chief in the war?" the Indian asked.

"I landed in France in May, 1917," Yogi began.

"I thought maybe white chief was in the war from the way he talked," the Indian said. "Him," he raised the head of his sleeping companion up so the last rays of the sunset shone on the sleeping

Indian's face, "he got V.C. Me I got D.S.O. and M.C. with bar. I was major in the Fourth C.M.R.'s."

"I'm glad to meet you," Yogi said. He felt strangely humiliated. It was growing dark. There was a single line of sunset where the sky and the water met 'way out on Lake Michigan. Yogi watched the narrow line of the sunset grow darker red, thin to a mere slit, and then fade. The sun was down behind the lake. Yogi stood up from the pile of logs. The Indian stood up too. He awakened his companion, and the Indian who had been sleeping stood up and looked at Yogi Johnson.

"We go to Petoskey to join Salvation Army," the larger and more wakeful Indian said.

"White chief come too," said the smaller Indian, who had been asleep.

"I'll walk in with you," Yogi replied. Who were. These Indians? What did they mean to him?

With the sun down, the slushy road was stiffening. It was freezing again. After all, maybe spring was not coming. Maybe it did not make a difference that he did not want a woman. Now that the spring was perhaps not coming there was a question about that. He would walk into town with the Indians and look for a beautiful woman and try and want her. He turned down the now frozen road. The two Indians walked by his side. They were all bound in the same direction.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Through the night down the frozen road the three walked into Petoskey. They had been silent walking along the frozen road. Their shoes broke the new-formed crusts of ice. Sometimes Yogi Johnson stepped through a thin film of ice into a pool of water. The Indians avoided the pools of water.

They came down the hill past the feed store, crossed the bridge over the Bear River, their boots ringing hollowly on the frozen planks of the bridge, and climbed the hill that led past Dr. Rumsey's house and the Home Tea-Room up to the pool-room. In front of the pool-room the two Indians stopped.

"White chief shoot pool?" the big Indian asked.

"No," Yogi Johnson said. "My right arm was crippled in the war."

"White chief have hard luck," the small Indian said. "Shoot one game Kelly pool."

"He got both arms and both legs shot off at Ypres," the big Indian said in an aside to Yogi. "Him very sensitive."

"All right," Yogi Johnson said. "I'll shoot one game."

They went into the hot, smoke-filled warmth of the pool-room. They obtained a table and took down cues from the wall. As the little Indian reached up to take down his cue Yogi noticed that he had two artificial arms. They were brown leather and were both buckled on at the elbow. On the smooth green cloth, under the bright electric lights, they played pool. At the end of an hour and a half, Yogi Johnson found that he owed the little Indian four dollars and thirty cents.

‘You shoot a pretty nice stick,” he remarked to the small Indian.

“Me not shoot so good since the war,” the small Indian replied.

“White chief like to drink a little?” asked the larger Indian.

“Where do you get it?” asked Yogi. “I have to go to Cheboygan for mine.”

“White chief come with red brothers,” the big Indian said.

They left the pool-table, placed their cues in the rack on the wall, paid at the counter, and went out into the night.

Along the dark streets men were sneaking home. The frost had come and frozen everything stiff and cold. The chinook had not been a real chinook, after all. Spring had not yet come, and the men who had commenced their orgies were halted by the chill in the air that told them the chinook wind had been a fake. That foreman, Yogi thought, he’ll catch hell tomorrow. Perhaps it had all been engineered by the pump-manufacturers to get the foreman out of his job. Such things were done. Through the dark of the night men were sneaking home in little groups.

The two Indians walked on either side of Yogi. They turned down a side street, and all three halted before a building that looked something like a stable. It was a stable. The two Indians opened the door and Yogi followed them inside. A ladder led upstairs to the floor above. It was dark inside the stable, but one of the Indians lit a match to show Yogi the ladder. The little Indian climbed up first, the metal hinges of his artificial limbs squeaking as he climbed. Yogi followed him, and the other Indian climbed last, lighting Yogi’s way with matches. The little Indian knocked on the roof where the ladder stopped against the wall. There was an answering knock. The little Indian knocked in answer, three sharp knocks on the roof above his head. A trap-door in the roof was raised, and they climbed up through into the lighted room.

In one corner of the room there was a bar with a brass rail and tall spittoons. Behind the bar was a mirror. Easy-chairs were all around the room. There was a pooltable. Magazines on sticks hung

in a line on the wall. There was a framed autographed portrait of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow on the wall draped in the American flag. Several Indians were sitting in the easy-chairs reading. A little group stood at the bar.

"Nice little club, eh?" An Indian came up and shook hands with Yogi. "I see you almost every day at the pump-factory."

He was a man who worked at one of the machines near Yogi in the factory. Another Indian came up and shook hands with Yogi. He also worked in the pump-factory.

"Rotten luck about the chinook," he said.

"Yes," Yogi said. "Just a false alarm."

"Come and have a drink," the first Indian said.

"I'm with a party," Yogi answered. Who were these Indians, anyway?

"Bring them along too," the first Indian said. "Always room for one more."

Yogi looked around him. The two Indians who had brought him were gone. Where were they? Then he saw them. They were over at the pool-table. The tall refined Indian to whom Yogi was talking followed his glance. He nodded his head in understanding.

"They're woods Indians," he explained apologetically. "We're most of us town Indians here."

"Yes, of course, " Yogi agreed.

"The little chap has a very good war record," the tall refined Indian remarked. "The other chap was a major too, I believe."

Yogi was guided over to the bar by the tall refined Indian. Behind the bar was the bartender. He was a Negro.

"How would some Dog's Head ale go?" asked the Indian.

"Fine," Yogi said.

"Two Dog's Heads, Bruce," the Indian remarked to the bartender. The bartender broke into a chuckle.

"What are you laughing at, Bruce?" the Indian asked.

The Negro broke into a shrill haunting laugh.

“I knowed it, Massa Red Dog,” he said. “I knowed you’d ordah dat Dog’s Head all the time.”

“He’s a merry fellow,” the Indian remarked to Yogi. “I must introduce myself. Red Dog’s the name.”

“Johnson’s the name,” Yogi said. “Yogi Johnson.”

“Oh, we are all quite familiar with your name, Mr. Johnson,” Red Dog smiled. “I would like you to meet my friends Mr. Sitting Bull, Mr. Poisoned Buffalo, and Chief Running Skunk-Backwards.”

“Sitting Bull’s a name I know,” Yogi remarked, shaking hands.

“Oh, I’m not one of those Sitting Bulls,” Mr. Sitting Bull said.

“Chief Running Skunk-Backwards’s great-grandfather once sold the entire Island of Manhattan for a few strings of wampum,” Red Dog explained.

“How very interesting,” Yogi said.

“That was a costly bit of wampum for our family,” Chief Running Skunk-Backwards smiled ruefully.

“Chief Running Skunk-Backwards has some of that wampum. Would you like to see it?” Red Dog asked.

“Indeed, I would.”

“It’s really no different from any other wampum,” Skunk-Backwards explained deprecatingly. He pulled a chain of wampum out of his pocket, and handed it to Yogi Johnson. Yogi looked at it curiously. What a part that string of wampum had played in this America of ours.

“Would you like to have one or two wampums for a keepsake?” Skunk-Backwards asked.

“I wouldn’t like to take your wampum,” Yogi demurred.

“They have no intrinsic value really,” Skunk-Backwards explained, detaching one or two wampums from the string.

“Their value is really a sentimental one to Skunk-Backwards’s family,” Red Dog said.

“It’s damned decent of you, Mr. Skunk-Backwards,” Yogi said.

“It’s nothing,” Skunk-Backwards said. “You’d do the same for me

in a moment."

"It's decent of you."

Behind the bar, Bruce, the Negro bartender, had been leaning forward and watching the wampums pass from hand to hand. His dark face shone. Sharply, without explanation, he broke into high-pitched uncontrolled laughter. The dark laughter of the Negro.

Red Dog looked at him sharply. "I say, Bruce," he spoke sharply; "your mirth is a little ill-timed."

Bruce stopped laughing and wiped his face on a towel. He rolled his eyes apologetically.

"Ah can't help it, Massa Red Dog. When I seen Mistah Skunk-Backhouse passin' dem wampums around I jess couldn't stand it no longa. Whad he wan sell a big town like New Yawk foh dem wampums for? Wampums! Take away yoah wampums!"

"Bruce is an eccentric," Red Dog explained, "but he's a corking bartender and a good-hearted chap."

"Youah right theah, Massa Red Dog," the bartender leaned forward. "I'se got a heart of puah gold."

"He is an eccentric, though," Red Dog apologized. "The house committee are always after me to get another bartender, but I like the chap, oddly enough."

"I'm all right, boss," Bruce said. "It's just that when I see something funny I just have to laff. You know I don' mean no harm, boss."

"Right enough, Bruce," Red Dog agreed. "You are an honest chap."

Yogi Johnson looked about the room. The other Indians had gone away from the bar, and Skunk-Backwards was showing the wampum to a little group of Indians in dinner dress who had just come in. At the pool-table the two woods Indians were still playing. They had removed their coats, and the light above the pool-table glinted on the metal joints in the little woods Indian's artificial arms. He had just run the table for the eleventh consecutive time.

“That little chap would have made a pool-player if he hadn’t had a bit of hard luck in the war,” Red Dog remarked. “Would you like to have a look about the club?” He took the check from Bruce, signed it, and Yogi followed him into the next room.

“Our committee room,” Red Dog said. On the walls were framed autographed photographs of Chief Bender, Francis Parkman, D. H. Lawrence, Chief Meyers, Stewart Edward White, Mary Austin, Jim Thorpe, General Custer, Glenn Warner, Mabel Dodge, and a full-length oil painting of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Beyond the committee room was a locker room with a small plunge bath or swimming-pool. “It’s really ridiculously small for a club,” Red Dog said. “But it makes a comfortable little hole to pop into when the evenings are dull.” He smiled. “We call it the wigwam, you know. That’s a little conceit of my own.”

“It’s a damned nice club,” Yogi said enthusiastically.

“Put you up if you like,” Red Dog offered. “What’s your tribe?”

“What do you mean?”

“Your tribe. What are you—Sac and Fox? Jibway? Cree, I imagine.”

“Oh,” said Yogi. “My parents came from Sweden.”

Red Dog looked at him closely. His eyes narrowed.

“You’re not having me on?”

“No. They either came from Sweden or Norway,” Yogi said.

“I’d have sworn you looked a bit on the white side,” Red Dog said. “Damned good thing this came out in time. There’d have been no end of scandal.” He put his hand to his head and pursed his lips. “Here, you,” he turned suddenly and gripped Yogi by the vest. Yogi felt the barrel of an automatic pushed hard against his stomach. “You’ll go quietly through the club-room, get your coat and hat and leave as though nothing had happened. Say polite good-by to anyone who happens to speak to you. And never come back. Get that, you Swede.”

“Yes,” said Yogi. “Put up your gun. I’m not afraid of your gun.”

“Do as I say,” Red Dog ordered. “As for those two pool-players that brought you here, I’ll soon have them out of this.”

Yogi went into the bright room, looked at the bar, where Bruce, the bartender, was regarding him, got his hat and coat, said good-night to Skunk-Backwards, who asked him why he was leaving so early, and the outside trap-door was swung up by Bruce. As Yogi started down the ladder the Negro burst out laughing. “I knowed it,” he laughed. “I knowed it all de time. No Swede gwine to fool ole Bruce.”

Yogi looked back and saw the laughing black face of the Negro framed in the oblong square of light that came through the raised trap-door. Once on the stable floor, Yogi looked around him. He was alone. The straw of the old stable was stiff and frozen under his feet. Where had he been? Had he been in an Indian club? What was it all about? Was this the end?

Above him a slit of light came in the roof. Then it was blocked by two black figures, there was the sound of a kick, a blow, a series of thuds, some dull, some sharp, and two human forms came crashing down the ladder. From above floated the dark, haunting sound of black Negro laughter.

The two woods Indians picked themselves up from the straw and limped toward the door. One of them, the little one, was crying. Yogi followed them out into the cold night. It was cold. The night was clear. The stars were out.

“Club no damn good,” the big Indian said. “Club heap no damn good.”

The little Indian was crying. Yogi, in the starlight, saw that he had lost one of his artificial arms.

“Me no play pool no more,” the little Indian sobbed. He shook his one arm at the window of the club, from which a thin slit of light came. “Club heap goddam hell no good.”

“Never mind, “ Yogi said. “I’ll get you a job in the pump-factory.”

“Pump-factory, hell,” the big Indian said. “We all go join Salvation Army.”

“Don’t cry,” Yogi said to the little Indian. “I’ll buy you a new arm.”

The little. Indian went on crying. He sat down in the snowy road. “No can play pool me no care about nothing,” he said.

From above them, out of the window of the club came the haunting sound of a Negro laughing.

Author’s Note to the Reader

In case it may have any historical value, I am glad to state that I wrote the foregoing chapter in two hours directly on the typewriter, and then went out to lunch with John Dos Passos, whom I consider a very forceful writer, and an exceedingly pleasant fellow besides. This is what is known in the provinces as log-rolling. We lunched on rollmops, Sole Meuniere, Civet de Lievre it la Chez Cocotte, marmelade de pommes, and washed it all down, as we used to say (eh, reader?) with a bottle of Montrachet 1919, with the sole, and a bottle of Hospice de Beaune 1919 apiece with the jugged hare. Mr. Dos Passos, I believe, shared a bottle of Chambertin with me over the marmelade de pommes (Eng., apple sauce). We drank two vieux mares, and after deciding not to go to the Café du Dome and talk about Art we both went to our respective homes and I wrote the following chapter. I would like the reader to particularly remark the way the complicated threads of the lives of the various characters in the book are gathered together, and then held there in that memorable scene in the beanery. It was when I read this chapter aloud to him that Mr. Dos Passos exclaimed, “Hemingway, you have wrought a masterpiece.”

P.S.—From The Author To The Reader

It is at this point, reader, that I am going to try and get that sweep and movement into the book that shows that the book is really a great book. I know you hope just as much as I do, reader, that I will get this sweep and movement because think what it will

mean to both of us. Mr. H. G. Wells, who has been visiting at our home (we're getting along in the literary game, eh, reader?) asked us the other day if perhaps our reader, that's you, reader—just think of it, H. G. Wells talking about you right in our home. Anyway, H. G. Wells asked us if perhaps our reader would not think too much of this story was autobiographical. Please, reader, just get that idea out of your head. We have lived in Petoskey, Mich., it is true, and naturally many of the characters are drawn from life as we lived it then. But they are other people, not the author. The author only comes into the story in these little notes. It is true that before starting this story we spent twelve years studying the various Indian dialects of the North, and there is still preserved in the museum at Cross Village our translation of the New Testament into Ojibway. But you would have done the same thing in our place, reader, and I think if you think it over you will agree with us on this. Now to get back to the story. It is meant in the best spirit of friendship when I say that you have no idea, reader, what a hard chapter this is going to be to write. As a matter of fact, and I try to be frank about these things, we will not even try and write it until tomorrow.

PART FOUR

The Passing of a Great Race and the Making and Marring of Americans

But perhaps it may be objected to me, that I have against my own rules introduced vices, and of a very black kind, into this work. To which I shall answer: first, that it is very difficult to pursue a series of human actions, and keep clear from them. Secondly, that the vices to be found here are rather the accidental consequences of some human frailty or foible, than causes habitually existing in the mind. Thirdly, that they are never set forth as the objects of ridicule, but detestation. Fourthly, that they are never the principal figure at that time on the scene: and lastly, they never produce the intended evil.

HENRY FIELDING

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Yogi Johnson walking down the silent street with his arm around the little Indian's shoulder. The big Indian walking along beside them. The cold night. The shuttered houses of the town. The little Indian, who has lost his artificial arm. The big Indian, who was also in the war. Yogi Johnson, who was in the war too. The three of them walking, walking, walking. Where were they going? Where could they go? What was there left?

Suddenly under a street light that swung on its drooping wire above a street corner, casting its light down on the snow, the big Indian stopped. "Walking no get us nowhere," he grunted. "Walking no good. Let white chief speak. Where we go, white chief?"

Yogi Johnson did not know. Obviously, walking was not the solution of their problem. Walking was all right in its way. Coxey's Army. A horde of men, seeking work, pressing on toward Washington. Marching men, Yogi thought. Marching on and on and where were they getting? Nowhere. Yogi knew it only too well. Nowhere. No damn where at all.

"White chief speak up," the big Indian said.

"I don't know," Yogi said. "I don't know at all." Was this what they had fought the war for? Was this what it was all about? It looked like it. Yogi standing under the street light. Yogi thinking and wondering. The two Indians in their mackinaw coats. One of the Indians with an empty sleeve. All of them wondering.

"White chief no speak?" the big Indian asked.

"No." What could Yogi say? What was there to say?

"Red brother speak?" asked the Indian.

“Speak out,” Yogi said. He looked down at the snow. “One man’s as good as another now.”

“White chief ever go to Brown’s Beanery?” asked the big Indian, looking into Yogi’s face under the arc light.

“No.” Yogi felt all in. Was this the end? A beanery. Well, a beanery as well as any other place. But a beanery. Well, why not? These Indians knew the town. They were ex-service men. They both had splendid war records. He knew that himself. But a beanery.

“White chief come with red brothers.” The tall Indian put his arm under Yogi’s arm. The little Indian fell into step. “Forward to the beanery.” Yogi spoke quietly. He was a white man, but he knew when he had enough. After all, the white race might not always be supreme. This Moslem revolt. Unrest in the East. Trouble in the West. Things looked black in the South. Now this condition of things in the North. Where was it taking him? Where did it all lead? Would it help him to want a woman? Would spring ever come? Was it worth while after all? He wondered.

The three of them striding along the frozen streets of Petoskey. Going somewhere now. En route. Huysmans wrote that. It would be interesting to read French. He must try it sometime. There was a street in Paris named after Huysmans. Right around the corner from where Gertrude Stein lived. Ah, there was a woman! Where were her experiments in words leading her? What was at the bottom of it? All that in Paris. Ah, Paris. How far it was to Paris now. Paris in the morning. Paris in the evening. Paris at night. Paris in the morning again. Paris at noon, perhaps. Why not? Yogi Johnson striding on. His mind never still.

All three of them striding on together. The arms of those that had arms linked through each other’s arms. Red men and white men walking together. Something had brought them together. Was it the war? Was it fate? Was it accident? Or was it just chance? These questions struggled with each other in Yogi Johnson’s brain. His brain was tired. He had been thinking too much lately. On still

they strode. Then, abruptly, they stopped.

The little Indian looked up at the sign. It shone in the night outside the frosted windows of the beanery. BEST BY TEST.

"Makeum heap big test," the little Indian grunted.

"White man's beanery got heap fine T-bone steak," the tall Indian grunted. "Take it from red brother." The Indians stood a little uncertainly outside the door. The tall Indian turned to Yogi. "White chief got dollars?"

"Yes, I've got money," Yogi answered. He was prepared to go the route. It was no time to turn back now. ,"The feed's on me, boys."

"White chief nature's nobleman," the tall Indian grunted.

"White chief rough diamond," the little Indian agreed.

"You'd do the same for me," Yogi deprecated. After all, perhaps it was true. It was a chance he was taking, He had taken a chance in Paris once. Steve Brodie had taken a chance. Or so they said. Chances were taken all over the world every day. In China, Chinamen were taking chances. In Africa, Africans. In Egypt, Egyptians. In Poland, Poles. In Russia, Russians. In Ireland, Irish. In Armenia—

"Armenians no take chances," the tall Indian grunted quietly. He had voiced Yogi's unspoken doubt. They were a canny folk these red men.

"Not even in the rug game?"

"Red brother think not," the. Indian said. His tones carried conviction to Yogi. Who were these Indians? There was something back of all this. They went into the beanery.

Author's Note to the Reader

It was at this point in the story, reader, that Mr. F. Scott Fitzgerald came to our home one afternoon, and after remaining for quite a while suddenly sat down in the fireplace and would not (or was it could not, reader?) get up and let the fire burn something else so as to keep the room warm. I know, reader, that these things

sometimes do not show in a story, but, just the same, they are happening, and think what they mean to chaps like you and me in the literary game. If you should think this part of the story is not as good as it might have been remember, reader, that day in and day out all over the world things like this are happening. Need I add, reader, that I have the utmost respect for Mr. Fitzgerald, and let anybody else attack him and I would be the first to spring to his defense! And that includes you too, reader, though I hate to speak out bluntly like this, and take the risk of breaking up a friendship of the sort that ours has gotten to be.

P.S.—To the Reader

As I read that chapter over, reader, it doesn't seem so bad. You may like it. I hope you will. And if you do like it, reader, and the rest of the book as well, will you tell your friends about it, and try and get them to buy the book just as you have done? I only get twenty cents on each book that is sold, and while twenty cents is not much nowadays still it will mount up to a lot if two or three hundred thousand copies of the book are sold. They will be, too, if every one likes the book as much as you and I do, reader. And listen, reader. I meant it when I said I would be glad to read anything you wrote. That wasn't just talk. Bring it along and we will go over it together. If you like, I'll re-write bits of it for you. I don't mean that in any critical sort of way either. If there is anything you do not like in this book just write to Mr. Scribner's Sons at the home office. They'll change it for you. Or, if you would rather, I will change it myself. You know what I think of you, reader. And you're not angry or upset about what I said about Scott Fitzgerald either, are you? I hope not. Now I am going to write the next chapter. Mr. Fitzgerald is gone and Mr. Dos Passos had gone to England, and I think I can promise you that it will be a bully chapter. At least, it will be just as good as I can write it. We both know how good that can be, if we read the blurbs, eh, reader?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Inside the beanery. They are all inside the beanery. Some do not see the others. Each are intent on themselves. Red men are intent on red men. White men are intent on white men or on white women. There are no red women. Are there no squaws any more? What has become of the squaws? Have we lost our squaws in America? Silently, through the door which she had opened, a squaw came into the room. She was clad only in a pair of worn moccasins. On her back was a papoose. Beside her walked a husky dog.

"Don't look!" the drummer shouted to the women at the counter.

"Here! Get her out of here!" the owner of the beanery shouted. The squaw was forcibly ejected by the Negro cook. They heard her thrashing around in the snow outside. Her husky dog was barking.

"My God! What that might have led to!" Scripps O'Neil mopped his forehead with a napkin.

The Indians had watched with impassive faces. Yogi Johnson had been unable to move. The waitresses had covered their faces with napkins or whatever was handy. Mrs. Scripps had covered her eyes with *The American Mercury*. Scripps O'Neil was feeling faint and shaken. Something had stirred inside him, some vague primordial feeling, as the squaw had come into the room

"Wonder where that squaw came from?" the drummer asked.

"Her my squaw," the little Indian said.

"Good God, man! Can't you clothe her?" Scripps O'Neil said in a dumb voice. There was a note of terror in his words.

"Her no like clothes," the little Indian explained. "Her woods

Indian."

Yogi Johnson was not listening. Something had broken inside of him. Something had snapped as the squaw came into the room. He had a new feeling. A feeling he thought had been lost for ever. Lost for always. Lost. Gone permanently. He knew now it was a mistake. He was all right now. By the merest chance he had found it out. What might he not have thought if 'that squaw had never come into the beanery? What black thoughts he had been thinking! He had been on the verge of suicide. Self-destruction. Killing himself. Here in this beanery. What a mistake that would have been. He knew now. What a botch he might have made of life. Killing himself. Let spring come now. Let it come. It couldn't come fast enough. Let spring come. He was ready for it.

"Listen," he said to the two Indians. "I want to tell you about something that happened to me in Paris."

The two Indians leaned forward. "White chief got the floor," the tall Indian remarked.

"What I thought was a very beautiful thing happened to me in Paris," Yogi began. "You Indians know Paris? Good. Well, it turned out to be the ugliest thing that ever happened to me."

The Indians grunted. They knew their Paris.

"It was the first day of my leave. I was walking along the Boulevard Malesherbes. A car passed me and a beautiful woman leaned out. She called to me and I came. She took me to a house, a mansion rather, in a distant part of Paris, and there a very beautiful thing happened to me. Afterward someone took me out a different door than I had come in by. The beautiful woman had told me that she would never, that she could never, see me again. I tried to get the number of the mansion but it was one of a block of mansions all looking the same.

"From then on all through my leave I tried to see that beautiful lady. Once I thought I saw her in the theatre. It wasn't her. Another time I caught a glimpse of what I thought was her in a passing taxi

and leaped into another taxi and followed. I lost the taxi. I was desperate. Finally on the next to the last night of my "leave I was so desperate and dull that I went with one of those guides that guarantee to show you all of Paris. We started out and visited various places. 'Is this all you've got?' I asked the guide.

" 'There is a real place, but it's very expensive,' the guide said. We compromised on a price finally, and the guide took me. It was in an old mansion. You looked through a slit in the wall. All around the wall were people looking through slits. There, looking through slits could be seen the uniforms of men of all the Allied countries, and many handsome South Americans in evening dress. I looked through a slit myself. For a while nothing happened. Then a beautiful woman came into the room with a young British officer. She took off her long fur coat and her hat and threw them into a chair. The officer was taking off his Sam Browne belt. I recognized her. It was the lady whom I had been with when the beautiful thing happened to me." Yogi Johnson looked at his empty plate of beans. "Since then," he said, "I have never wanted a woman. How I have suffered I cannot tell. But I've suffered, boys, I've suffered. I blamed it on the war. I blamed it on France. I blamed it on the decay of morality in general. I blamed it on the younger generation. I blamed it here. I blamed it there. Now I am cured. Here's five dollars for you, boys." His eyes were shining. "Get some more to eat. Take a trip somewhere. This is the happiest day of my life."

He stood up from his stool before the counter, shook the one Indian impulsively by the hand, rested his hand for a minute on the other Indian's shoulder, opened the door of the beanery, and strode out into the night.

The two Indians looked at one another. "White chief heap nice fella," observed the big Indian.

"Think him was in the war?" asked the little Indian.

"Me wonder," the big Indian said.

"White chief said he buy me new artificial arm," the little Indian

grumbled.

"Maybe you get more than that," the big Indian said.

"Me wonder," the little Indian said. They went on eating.

At the other end of the counter of the beanery a marriage was coming to an end.

Scripps O'Neil and his wife sat side by side. Mrs. Scripps knew now. She couldn't hold him. She had tried and failed. She had lost. She knew it was a losing game. There was no holding him now. Mandy was talking again. Talking. Talking. Always talking. That interminable stream of literary gossip that was bringing her, Diana's, marriage to an end. She couldn't hold him. He was going. Going. Going away from her. Diana sitting there in misery. Scripps listening to Mandy talking. Mandy talking. Talking. Talking. The drummer, an old friend now, the drummer, sitting reading his *Detroit News.* She couldn't hold him. She couldn't hold him. She couldn't hold him.

The little Indian got up from his stool at the beanery counter, and went over to the window. The glass on the window was covered with thick rimy frost. The little Indian breathed on the frozen windowpane, rubbed the spot bare with the empty sleeve of his mackinaw coat and looked out into the night. Suddenly he turned from the window and rushed out into the night. The tall Indian watched him go, leisurely finished his meal, took a toothpick, placed it between his teeth, and then he too followed his friend out into the night.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

They were alone in the beanery now. Scripps and Mandy and Diana. Only the drummer was with them. He was an old friend now. But his nerves were on edge tonight. He folded his paper abruptly and started for the door.

"See you all later," he said. He went out into the night. It seemed the only thing to do. He did it.

Only three of them in the beanery now. Scripps and Mandy and Diana. Only those three. Mandy was talking. Leaning on the counter and talking. Scripps with his eyes fixed on Mandy. Diana made no pretense of listening now. She knew it was over. It Was all over now. But she would make one more attempt. One more last gallantry. Perhaps she still could hold him. Perhaps it had all been just a dream. She steadied her voice and then she spoke.

"Scripps, dear," she said. Her voice shook a little. She steadied it.

"What's on your mind?" Scripps asked abruptly. Ah, there it was. That horrid clipped speech again.

"Scripps, dear, wouldn't you like to come home?" Diana's voice quavered. "There's a new *Mercury."* She had changed from the London *Mercury* to *The American Mercury* just to please Scripps. "It just came. I wish you felt like coming home, Scripps, there's a splendid thing in this *Mercury.* Do come home, Scripps, I've never asked anything of you before. Come home, Scripps! Oh, won't you come home?"

Scripps looked up. Diana's heart beat faster. Perhaps he was coming. Perhaps she was holding him. Holding him. Holding him.

“Do come, Scripps, dear,” Diana said softly. “There’s a wonderful editorial in it by Mencken about chiropractors.”

Scripps looked away.

“Won’t you come, Scripps?” Diana pleaded.

“No,” Scripps said. “I don’t give a damn about Mencken any more.”

Diana dropped her head. “Oh, Scripps,” she said. “Oh, Scripps.” This was the end. She had her answer now. She had lost him. Lost him. Lost him. It was over. Finished. Done for. She sat crying silently. Mandy was talking again.

Suddenly Diana straightened up. She had one last request to make. One thing she would ask him. Only one. He might refuse her. He might not grant it. But she would ask him.

“Scripps,” she said.

“What’s the trouble?” Scripps turned in irritation. Perhaps, after all, he was sorry for her. He wondered.

“Can I take the bird, Scripps?” Diana’s voice broke.

“Sure,” said Scripps. “Why not?”

Diana picked up the bird-cage. The bird was asleep. Perched on one leg as on that night when they had first met. What was it he was like? Ah, yes. Like an old osprey. An old, old osprey from her own Lake Country. She held the cage to her tightly.

“Thank you, Scripps,” she said. “Thank you for this bird.” Her voice broke. “And now I must be going.”

Quietly, silently, gathering her shawl around her, clutching the cage with the sleeping bird and the copy of *The Mercury* to her breast, with only a backward glance, a last glance at him who had been her Scripps, she opened the door of the beanery, and went out into the night. Scripps did not even see her go. He was intent on what Mandy was saying. Mandy was talking again.

“That bird she just took out,” Mandy was saying.

“Oh, did she take a bird out?” Scripps asked. “Go on with the story.”

“You used to wonder about what sort of bird that was,” Mandy went on.

“That’s right,” Scripps agreed.

“Well that reminds me of a story about Gosse and the Marquis of Buque,” Mandy went on.

“Tell it, Mandy. Tell it,” Scripps urged.

“It seems a great friend of mine, Ford, you’ve heard me speak of him before, was in the marquis’s castle during the war. His regiment was billeted there and the marquis, one of the richest if not the richest man in England, was serving in Ford’s regiment as a private. Ford was sitting in the library one evening. The library was a most extraordinary place. The walls were made of bricks of gold set into tiles or something. I forget exactly how it was.”

“Go on,” Scripps urged. “It doesn’t matter.”

“Anyhow, in the middle of the wall of the library was a stuffed flamingo in a glass case.”

“They understand interior decorating, these English,” Scripps said.

“Your wife was English, wasn’t she?” asked Mandy.

“From the Lake Country,” Scripps answered. “Go on with the story.”

“Well, anyway,” Mandy went on, “Ford was sitting there in the library one evening after mess when the butler came in and said: ‘The Marquis of Buque’s compliments and might he show the library to a group of friends with whom he has been dining?’ They used to let him dine out and sometimes they let him sleep in the castle. Ford said, ‘Quite,’ and in came the marquis in his private’s uniform followed by Sir Edmund Gosse and Professor Whatsisname, I forget it for the moment, from Oxford. Gosse stopped in front of the stuffed flamingo in the glass case and said, ‘What have we here, Buque?’

“ ‘It’s a flamingo, Sir Edmund,’ the marquis answered.

“ ‘That’s not my idea of a flamingo,’ Gosse remarked.

“ ‘No, Gosse. That’s God’s idea of a flamingo,’ Professor Whatsisname said. I wish I could remember his name.”

“Don’t bother,” Scripps said. His eyes were bright. He leaned forward. Something was pounding inside of him. Something he could not control. “I love you, Mandy,” he said. “I love you. You are my woman.” The thing was pounding away inside of him. It would not stop.

“That’s all right,” Mandy answered. “I’ve known you were my man for a long time. Would you like to hear another story? Speaking of woman.”

“Go on,” Scripps said. “You must never stop, Mandy. You are my woman now.”

“Sure,” Mandy agreed. “This story is about when Knut Hamsun was a streetcar conductor in Chicago.”

“Go on,” Scripps said. “You are my woman now, Mandy.”

He repeated the phrase to himself. My woman. My woman. You are my woman. She is my woman. It is my woman. My woman. But, somehow, he was not satisfied. Somewhere, somehow, there must be something else. Something else. My woman. The words were a little hollow now. Into his mind, though he tried to thrust it out, there came again the monstrous picture of the squaw as she strode silently into the room. That squaw. She did not wear clothes, because she did not like them. Hardy, braving the winter nights. What might not the spring bring? Mandy was talking. Mandy talking on in the beanery. Mandy telling her stories. It grows late in the beanery. Mandy talks on. She is his woman now. He is her man. But is he her man? In Scripps’s brain that vision of the squaw. The squaw that strode unannounced into the beanery. The squaw who had been thrown out into the snow. Mandy talking on. Telling literary reminiscences. Authentic incidents. They had the ring of truth. But were they enough? Scripps wondered. She was his woman. But for how long? Scripps wondered. Mandy talking on in the beanery. Scripps listening. But his mind straying away. Straying

away. Straying away. Where was it straying? Out into the night. Out into the night.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Night in Petoskey. Long past midnight. Inside the beanery a light burning. The town asleep under the Northern moon. To the North the tracks of the G. R. & I. Railroad running far into the North. Cold tracks, stretching North toward Mackinaw City and St. Ignace. Cold tracks to be walking on at this time of night.

North of the frozen little Northern town a couple walking side by side on the tracks. It is Yogi Johnson walking with the squaw. As they walk Yogi Johnson silently strips off his garments. One by one he strips off his garments, and casts them beside the track. In the end he is clad only in a worn pair of pump-maker shoes. Yogi Johnson, naked in the moonlight, walking North beside the squaw. The squaw striding along beside him. She carries the papoose on her back in his bark cradle. Yogi attempts to take the papoose from her. He would carry the papoose. The husky dog whines and licks at Yogi Johnson's ankles. No, the squaw would carry the papoose herself. On they stride. Into the North. Into the Northern night.

Behind them come two figures. Sharply etched in the moonlight. It is the two Indians. The two woods Indians. They stoop and gather up the garments Yogi Johnson has cast away. Occasionally, they grunt to one another. Striding softly along in the moonlight. Their keen eyes not missing a single cast-off garment. When the last garment has been cast off they look and see far ahead of them the two figures in the moonlight. The two Indians straighten up. They examine the garments.

"White chief snappy dresser," the tall Indian remarks, holding up an initialled shirt.

“White chief going get pretty cold,” small Indian remarks. He hands a vest to the tall Indian. The tall Indian rolls all the clothing, all the cast-off garments, into a bundle, and they start back along the tracks to the town.

“Better keep clothes for white chief or sellem Salvation Army?” asks the short Indian.

“Better sellem Salvation Army,” the tall Indian grunts. “White chief maybe never come back.”

“White chief come back all right,” grunted the little Indian.

“Better sellem Salvation Army, anyway,” grunts the tall Indian. “White chief need new clothes, anyhow, when spring comes.”

As they walked down the tracks toward town, the air seemed to soften. The Indians walk uneasily now. Through the tamaracks and cedars beside the railway tracks a warm wind is blowing. The snow-drifts are melting now beside the tracks. Something stirs inside the two Indians. Some urge. Some strange pagan disturbance. The warm wind is blowing. The tall Indian stops, moistens his finger and holds it up in the air. The little Indian watches. “Chinook?” he asks.

“Heap chinook,” the tall Indian says. They hurry on toward town. The moon is blurred now by clouds carried by the warm chinook wind that is blowing.

“Want to get in town before rush,” the tall Indian grunts.

“Red brothers want be well up in line,” the little Indian grunts anxiously.

“Nobody work in factory now,” the tall Indian grunted.

“Better hurry.”

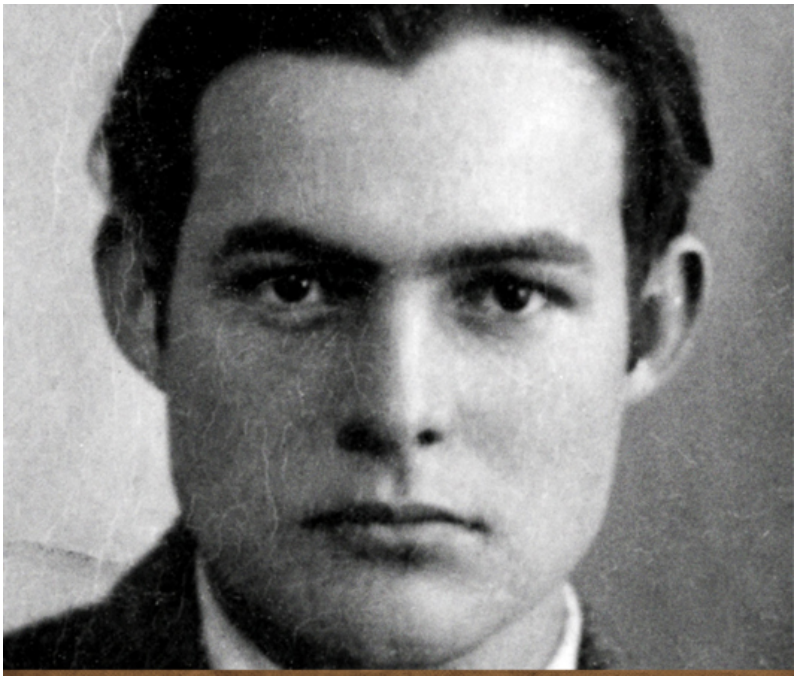
The warm wind blows. Inside the Indians strange longings were stirring. They knew what they wanted. Spring at last was coming to the frozen little Northern town. The two Indians hurried along the track.

The End

Author's Final Note to the Reader

Well, reader, how did you like it? It took me ten days to write it. Has it been worth it? There is just one place I would like to clear up. You remember back in the story where the elderly waitress, Diana, tells about how she lost her mother in Paris, and woke up to find herself with a French general in the next room? I thought perhaps you might be interested to know the real explanation of that. What actually happened was that her mother was taken violently ill with the bubonic plague in the night, and the doctor who was called diagnosed the case and warned the authorities. It was the day the great exposition was to be opened, and think what a case of bubonic plague would have done for the exposition as publicity. So the French authorities simply had the woman disappear. She died toward morning. The general who was summoned and who then got into bed in the same room where the mother had been, always seemed to us like a pretty brave man. He was one of the big stockholders in the exposition, though, I believe. Anyway, reader, as a piece of secret history it always seemed to me like an awfully good story, and I know you would rather have me explain it here than drag an explanation into the novel, where really, after all, it has no place. It is interesting to observe, though, how the French police hushed the whole matter up, and how quickly they got ahold of the coiffeur and the cab-driver. Of course, what it shows is that when you're travelling abroad alone, or even with your mother, you simply cannot be too careful. I hope it is all right about bringing this in here, but I just felt l owed it to you, reader, to give some explanation. I do not believe in these

protracted good-bys any more than I do in long engagements, so I will just say a simple farewell and Godspeed, reader, and leave you now to your own devices.



ERNEST HEMINGWAY

The Sun Also Rises

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

The Sun Also Rises

Ernest Hemingway

CONTENTS

Dedication

Epigraph

BOOK I

Chapter I
Chapter II
Chapter III
Chapter IV
Chapter V
Chapter VI
Chapter VII

BOOK II

Chapter VIII
Chapter IX
Chapter X
Chapter XI
Chapter XII
Chapter XIII
Chapter XIV
Chapter XV
Chapter XVI
Chapter XVII
Chapter XVIII

BOOK III

Chapter XIX

Dedication

This book is for Hadley and for John Hadley Nicanor

Epigraph

“You are all a lost generation.”

Gertrude Stein in conversation

“One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever... The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose... The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.... All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come. thither they return again.”

Ecclesiastes

BOOK I

Chapter I

Robert Cohn was once middleweight boxing champion of Princeton. Do not think that I am very much impressed by that as a boxing title, but it meant a lot to Cohn. He cared nothing for boxing, in fact he disliked it, but he learned it painfully and thoroughly to counteract the feeling of inferiority and shyness he had felt on being treated as a Jew at Princeton. There was a certain inner comfort in knowing he could knock down anybody who was snooty to him, although, being very shy and a thoroughly nice boy, he never fought except in the gym. He was Spider Kelly's star pupil. Spider Kelly taught all his young gentlemen to box like featherweights, no matter whether they weighed one hundred and five or two hundred and five pounds. But it seemed to fit Cohn. He was really very fast. He was so good that Spider promptly overmatched him and got his nose permanently flattened. This increased Cohn's distaste for boxing, but it gave him a certain satisfaction of some strange sort, and it certainly improved his nose. In his last year at Princeton he read too much and took to wearing spectacles. I never met anyone of his class who remembered him. They did not even remember that he was middleweight boxing champion.

I mistrust all frank and simple people, especially when their stories hold together, and I always had a suspicion that perhaps Robert Cohn had never been middleweight boxing champion, and that perhaps a horse had stepped on his face, or that maybe his mother had been frightened or seen something, or that he had,

maybe, bumped into something as a young child, but I finally had somebody verify the story from Spider Kelly. Spider Kelly not only remembered Cohn. He had often wondered what had become of him.

Robert Cohn was a member, through his father, of one of the richest Jewish families in New York, and through his mother of one of the oldest. At the military school where he prepped for Princeton, and played a very good end on the football team, no one had made him race-conscious. No one had ever made him feel he was a Jew, and hence any different from anybody else, until he went to Princeton. He was a nice boy, a friendly boy, and very shy, and it made him bitter. He took it out in boxing, and he came out of Princeton with painful self-consciousness and the flattened nose, and was married by the first girl who was nice to him. He was married five years, had three children, lost most of the fifty thousand dollars his father left him, the balance of the estate having gone to his mother, hardened into a rather unattractive mould under domestic unhappiness with a rich wife; and just when he had made up his mind to leave his wife she left him and went off with a miniature-painter. As he had been thinking for months about leaving his wife and had not done it because it would be too cruel to deprive her of himself, her departure was a very healthful shock.

The divorce was arranged and Robert Cohn went out to the Coast. In California he fell among literary people and, as he still had a little of the fifty thousand left, in a short time he was backing a review of the Arts. The review commenced publication in Carmel, California, and finished in Provincetown, Massachusetts. By that time Cohn, who had been regarded purely as an angel, and whose name had appeared on the editorial page merely as a member of the advisory board, had become the sole editor. It was his money and he discovered he liked the authority of editing. He was sorry when the magazine became too expensive and he had to give it up.

By that time, though, he had other things to worry about. He

had been taken in hand by a lady who hoped to rise with the magazine. She was very forceful, and Cohn never had a chance of not being taken in hand. Also he was sure that he loved her. When this lady saw that the magazine was not going to rise, she became a little disgusted with Cohn and decided that she might as well get what there was to get while there was still something available, so she urged that they go to Europe, where Cohn could write. They came to Europe, where the lady had been educated, and stayed three years. During these three years, the first spent in travel, the last two in Paris, Robert Cohn had two friends, Braddocks and myself. Braddocks was his literary friend. I was his tennis friend.

The lady who had him, her name was Frances, found toward the end of the second year that her looks were going, and her attitude toward Robert changed from one of careless possession and exploitation to the absolute determination that he should marry her. During this time Robert's mother had settled an allowance on him, about three hundred dollars a month. During two years and a half I do not believe that Robert Cohn looked at another woman. He was fairly happy, except that, like many people living in Europe, he would rather have been in America, and he had discovered writing. He wrote a novel, and it was not really such a bad novel as the critics later called it, although it was a very poor novel. He read many books, played bridge, played tennis, and boxed at a local gymnasium.

I first became aware of his lady's attitude toward him one night after the three of us had dined together. We had dined at l'Avenue's and afterward went to the Café de Versailles for coffee. We had several *fines* after the coffee, and I said I must be going. Cohn had been talking about the two of us going off somewhere on a weekend trip. He wanted to get out of town and get in a good walk. I suggested we fly to Strasbourg and walk up to Saint Odile, or somewhere or other in Alsace. "I know a girl in Strasbourg who can show us the town," I said.

Somebody kicked me under the table. I thought it was accidental and went on: “She’s been there two years and knows everything there is to know about the town. She’s a swell girl.”

I was kicked again under the table and, looking, saw Frances, Robert’s lady, her chin lifting and her face hardening.

“Hell,” I said, “why go to Strasbourg? We could go up to Bruges, or to the Ardennes.”

Cohn looked relieved. I was not kicked again. I said good-night and went out. Cohn said he wanted to buy a paper and would walk to the corner with me. “For God’s sake,” he said, “why did you say that about that girl in Strasbourg for? Didn’t you see Frances?”

“No, why should I? If I know an American girl that lives in Strasbourg what the hell is it to Frances?”

“It doesn’t make any difference. Any girl. I couldn’t go, that would be all.”

“Don’t be silly.”

“You don’t know Frances. Any girl at all. Didn’t you see the way she looked?”

“Oh, well,” I said, “let’s go to Senlis.”

“Don’t get sore.”

“I’m not sore. Senlis is a good place and we can stay at the Grand Cerf and take a hike in the woods and come home.”

“Good, that will be fine.”

“Well, I’ll see you tomorrow at the courts,” I said. “Goodnight, Jake,” he said, and started back to the café.

“You forgot to get your paper,” I said.

“That’s so.” He walked with me up to the kiosk at the corner. “You are not sore, are you, Jake?” He turned with the paper in his hand.

“No, why should I be?”

“See you at tennis,” he said. I watched him walk back to the café holding his paper. I rather liked him and evidently she led him quite a life.

Chapter II

That winter Robert Cohn went over to America with his novel, and it was accepted by a fairly good publisher. His going made an awful row I heard, and I think that was where Frances lost him, because several women were nice to him in New York, and when he came back he was quite changed. He was more enthusiastic about America than ever, and he was not so simple, and he was not so nice. The publishers had praised his novel pretty highly and it rather went to his head. Then several women had put themselves out to be nice to him, and his horizons had all shifted. For four years his horizon had been absolutely limited to his wife. For three years, or almost three years, he had never seen beyond Frances. I am sure he had never been in love in his life.

He had married on the rebound from the rotten time he had in college, and Frances took him on the rebound from his discovery that he had not been everything to his first wife. He was not in love yet but he realized that he was an attractive quantity to women, and that the fact of a woman caring for him and wanting to live with him was not simply a divine miracle. This changed him so that he was not so pleasant to have around. Also, playing for higher stakes than he could afford in some rather steep bridge games with his New York connections, he had held cards and won several hundred dollars. It made him rather vain of his bridge game, and he talked several times of how a man could always make a living at bridge if he were ever forced to.

Then there was another thing. He had been reading W. H.

Hudson. That sounds like an innocent occupation, but Cohn had read and reread *The Purple Land*. *The Purple Land* is a very sinister book if read too late in life. It recounts splendid imaginary amorous adventures of a perfect English gentleman in an intensely romantic land, the scenery of which is very well described. For a man to take it at thirty-four as a guidebook to what life holds is about as safe as it would be for a man of the same age to enter Wall Street direct from a French convent, equipped with a complete set of the more practical Alger books. Cohn, I believe, took every word of *The Purple Land* as literally as though it had been an R. G. Dun report. You understand me, he made some reservations, but on the whole the book to him was sound. It was all that was needed to set him off. I did not realize the extent to which it had set him off until one day he came into my office.

"Hello, Robert," I said. "Did you come in to cheer me up?"

"Would you like to go to South America, Jake?" he asked.

"No."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. I never wanted to go. Too expensive. You can see all the South Americans you want in Paris anyway."

"They're not the real South Americans."

"They look awfully real to me."

I had a boat train to catch with a week's mail stories, and only half of them written.

"Do you know any dirt?" I asked.

"No."

"None of your exalted connections getting divorces?"

"No; listen, Jake. If I handled both our expenses, would you go to South America with me?"

"Why me?"

"You can talk Spanish. And it would be more fun with two of us."

"No," I said, "I like this town and I go to Spain in the

summertime."

"All my life I've wanted to go on a trip like that," Cohn said. He sat down. "I'll be too old before I can ever do it."

"Don't be a fool," I said. "You can go anywhere you want. You've got plenty of money."

"I know. But I can't get started."

"Cheer up," I said. "All countries look just like the moving pictures."

But I felt sorry for him. He had it badly.

"I can't stand it to think my life is going so fast and I'm not really living it."

"Nobody ever lives their life all the way up except bullfighters."

"I'm not interested in bullfighters. That's an abnormal life. I want to go back in the country in South America. We could have a great trip."

"Did you ever think about going to British East Africa to shoot?"

"No, I wouldn't like that."

"I'd go there with you."

"No; that doesn't interest me."

"That's because you never read a book about it. Go on and read a book all full of love affairs with the beautiful shiny black princesses."

"I want to go to South America."

He had a hard, Jewish, stubborn streak. "Come on downstairs and have a drink."

"Aren't you working?"

"No," I said. We went down the stairs to the café on the ground floor. I had discovered that was the best way to get rid of friends. Once you had a drink all you had to say was: "Well, I've got to get back and get off some cables," and it was done. It is very important to discover graceful exits like that in the newspaper business, where it is such an important part of the ethics that you should never seem to be working. Anyway, we went downstairs to the bar and had a

whiskey and soda. Cohn looked at the bottles in bins around the wall. “This is a good place,” he said.

‘There’s a lot of liquor,” I agreed.

“Listen, Jake,” he leaned forward on the bar. “Don’t you ever get the feeling that all your life is going by and you’re not taking advantage of it? Do you realize you’ve lived nearly half the time you have to live already?”

“Yes, every once in a while.”

“Do you know that in about thirty-five years more we’ll be dead?”

“What the hell, Robert,” I said. “What the hell.”

“I’m serious.”

“It’s one thing I don’t worry about,” I said.

“You ought to.”

“I’ve had plenty to worry about one time or other. I’m through worrying.”

“Well, I want to go to South America.”

“Listen, Robert, going to another country doesn’t make any difference. I’ve tried all that. You can’t get away from yourself by moving from one place to another. There’s nothing to that.”

“But you’ve never been to South America.”

“South America hell! If you went there the way you feel now it would be exactly the same. This is a good town. Why don’t you start living your life in Paris?”

“I’m sick of Paris, and I’m sick of the Quarter.”

“Stay away from the Quarter. Cruise around by yourself and see what happens to you.”

“Nothing happens to me. I walked alone all one night and nothing happened except a bicycle cop stopped me and asked to see my papers.”

“Wasn’t the town nice at night?”

“I don’t care for Paris.”

So there you were. I was sorry for him, but it was not a thing

you could do anything about, because right away you ran up against the two stubbornnesses: South America could fix it and he did not like Paris. He got the first idea out of a book, and I suppose the second came out of a book too.

"Well," I said, "I've got to go upstairs and get off some cables."

"Do you really have to go?"

"Yes, I've got to get these cables off."

"Do you mind if I come up and sit around the office?"

"No, come on up."

He sat in the outer room and read the papers, and the Editor and Publisher and I worked hard for two hours. Then I sorted out the carbons, stamped on a byline, put the stuff in a couple of big manila envelopes and rang for a boy to take them to the Gare St. Lazare. I went out into the other room and there was Robert Cohn asleep in the big chair. He was asleep with his head on his arms. I did not like to wake him up, but I wanted to lock the office and shove off. I put my hand on his shoulder. He shook his head. "I can't do it," he said, and put his head deeper into his arms. "I can't do it. Nothing will make me do it."

"Robert," I said, and shook him by the shoulder. He looked up. He smiled and blinked.

"Did I talk out loud just then?"

"Something. But it wasn't clear."

"God, what a rotten dream!"

"Did the typewriter put you to sleep?"

"Guess so. I didn't sleep all last night."

"What was the matter?"

"Talking," he said.

I could picture it. I have a rotten habit of picturing the bedroom scenes of my friends. We went out to the Café Napolitain to have an *apéritif* and watch the evening crowd on the Boulevard.

Chapter III

It was a warm spring night and I sat at a table on the terrace of the Napolitain after Robert had gone, watching it get dark and the electric signs come on, and the red and green stop-and-go traffic signal, and the crowd going by, and the horse cabs clippety-clopping along at the edge of the solid taxi traffic, and the *poules* going by, singly and in pairs, looking for the evening meal. I watched a good looking girl walk past the table and watched her go up the street and lost sight of her, and watched another, and then saw the first one coming back again. She went by once more and I caught her eye, and she came over and sat down at the table. The waiter came up.

"Well, what will you drink?" I asked.

"Pernod."

"That's not good for little girls."

"Little girl yourself. Dites garçon, un pernod."

"A pernod for me, too."

"What's the matter?" she asked. "Going on a party?"

"Sure. Aren't you?"

"I don't know. You never know in this town."

"Don't you like Paris?"

"No."

"Why don't you go somewhere else?"

"Isn't anywhere else."

"You're happy, all right."

"Happy, hell!"

Pernod is greenish imitation absinthe. When you add water it turns milky. It tastes like licorice and it has a good uplift, but it drops you just as far. We sat and drank it, and the girl looked sullen.

"Well," I said, "are you going to buy me a dinner?"

She grinned and I saw why she made a point of not laughing. With her mouth closed she was a rather pretty girl. I paid for the saucers and we walked out to the street. I hailed a horse cab and the driver pulled up at the curb. Settled back in the slow, smoothly rolling *fiacre* we moved lip the Avenue de l'Opéra, passed the locked doors of the shops, their windows lighted, the Avenue broad and shiny and almost deserted. The cab passed the *New York Herald* bureau with the window full of clocks.

"What are all the clocks for?" she asked.

"They show the hour all over America."

"Don't kid me."

We turned off the Avenue up the Rue des Pyramides, through the traffic of the Rue de Rivoli, and through a dark gate into the Tuileries. She cuddled against me and I put my arm around her. She looked up to be kissed. She touched me with one hand and I put her hand away.

"Never mind."

"What's the matter? You sick?"

"Yes."

"Everybody's sick. I'm sick, too."

We came out of the Tuileries into the light and crossed the Seine and then turned up the Rue des Saints Pères.

"You oughtn't to drink pernod if you're sick."

"You neither."

"It doesn't make any difference with me. It doesn't make any difference with a woman."

"What are you called?"

"Georgette. How are you called?"

"Jacob."

"That's a Flemish name."

"American too."

"You're not Flamand?"

"No, American."

"Good, I detest Flamands."

By this time we were at the restaurant. I called to the *cocher* to stop. We got out and Georgette did not like the looks of the place. "This is no great thing of a restaurant."

"No," I said. "Maybe you would rather go to Foyot's. Why don't you keep the cab and go on?"

I had picked her up because of a vague sentimental idea that it would be nice to eat with someone. It was a long time since I had dined with a *poule,* and I had forgotten how dull it could be. We went into the restaurant, passed Madame Lavigne at the desk and into a little room. Georgette cheered up a little under the food.

"It isn't bad here," she said. "It isn't chic, but the food is all right."

"Better than you eat in Liège."

"Brussels, you mean."

We had another bottle of wine and Georgette made a joke. She smiled and showed all her bad teeth, and we touched glasses. "You're not a bad type," she said. "It's a shame you're sick. We get on well. What's the matter with you, anyway?"

"I got hurt in the war," I said.

"Oh, that dirty war."

We would probably have gone on and discussed the war and agreed that it was in reality a calamity for civilization, and perhaps would have been better avoided. I was bored enough. Just then from the other room someone called: "Barnes! I say, Barnes! Jacob Barnes!"

"It's a friend calling me," I explained, and went out.

There was Braddocks at a big table with a party: Cohn, Frances

Clyne, Mrs. Braddocks, several people I did not know.

"You're coming to the dance, aren't you?" Braddocks asked.

"What dance?"

"Why, the dancings. Don't you know we've revived them?" Mrs. Braddocks put in.

"You must come, Jake. We're all going," Frances said from the end of the table. She was tall and had a smile.

"Of course, he's coming," Braddocks said. "Come in and have coffee with us, Barnes."

"Right."

"And bring your friend," said Mrs. Braddocks laughing. She was a Canadian and had all their easy social graces.

"Thanks, we'll be in," I said. I went back to the small room.

"Who are your friends?" Georgette asked.

"Writers and artists."

"There are lots of those on this side of the river."

"Too many."

"I think so. Still, some of them make money."

"Oh, yes."

We finished the meal and the wine. "Come on," I said. 'We're going to have coffee with the others."

Georgette opened her bag, made a few passes at her face as she looked in the little mirror, re-defined her lips with the lipstick, and straightened her hat.

"Good," she said.

We went into the room full of people and Braddocks and the men at his table stood up.

"I wish to present my fiancée, Mademoiselle Georgette Leblanc," I said. Georgette smiled that wonderful smile, and we shook hands all round.

"Are you related to Georgette Leblanc, the singer?" Mrs. Braddocks asked.

"Connais pas," Georgette answered.

“But you have the same name,” Mrs. Eraddocks insisted cordially.

“No,” said Georgette. “Not at all. My name is Hobin.”

“But Mr. Barnes introduced you as Mademoiselle Georgette Leblanc. Surely he did,” insisted Mrs. Braddocks, who in the excitement of talking French was liable to have no idea what she was saying.

“He’s a fool,” Georgette said.

“Oh, it was a joke, then,” Mrs. Braddocks said.

“Yes,” said Georgette. “To laugh at.”

“Did you hear that, Henry?” Mrs. Braddocks called down the table to Braddocks. “Mr. Barnes introduced his fiancée as Mademoiselle Leblanc, and her name is actually Hobin.”

“Of course, darling. Mademoiselle Hobin, I’ve known her for a very long time.”

“Oh, Mademoiselle Hobin,” Frances Clyne called, speaking French very rapidly and not seeming so proud and astonished as Mrs. Braddocks at its coming out really French. “Have you been in Paris long? Do you like it here? You love Paris, do you not?”

“Who’s she?” Georgette turned to me. “Do I have to talk to her?”

She turned to Frances, sitting smiling, her hands folded, her head poised on her long neck, her lips pursed ready to start talking again.

“No, I don’t like Paris. It’s expensive and dirty.”

“Really? I find it so extraordinarily clean. One of the cleanest cities in all Europe.”

“I find it dirty.”

“How strange! But perhaps you have not been here very long.” “I’ve been here long enough.”

“But it does have nice people in it. One must grant that.”

Georgette turned to me. “You have nice friends.”

Frances was a little drunk and would have liked to have kept it up but the coffee came, and Lavigne with the liqueurs, and after

that we all went out and started for Braddocks's dancing club.

The dancing club was a *bal musette* in the Rue de la Montagne Sainte Geneviève. Five nights a week the working people of the Pantheon quarter danced there. One night a week it was the dancing club. On Monday nights it was closed. When we arrived it was quite empty, except for a policeman sitting near the door, the wife of the proprietor back of the zinc bar, and the proprietor himself. The daughter of the house came downstairs as we went in. There were long benches, and tables ran across the room, and at the far end a dancing floor.

"I wish people would come earlier," Braddocks said. The daughter came up and wanted to know what we would drink. The proprietor got up on a high stool beside the dancing floor and began to play the accordion. He had a string of bells around one of his ankles and beat time with his foot as he played. Everyone danced. It was hot and we came off the floor perspiring.

"My God," Georgette said. "What a box to sweat in!"

"It's hot."

"Hot, my God!"

"Take off your hat."

"That's a good idea."

Someone asked Georgette to dance, and I went over to the bar. It was really very hot and the accordion music was pleasant in the hot night. I drank a beer, standing in the doorway and getting the cool breath of wind from the street. Two taxis were coming down the steep street. They both stopped in front of the Bal. A crowd of young men, some in jerseys and some in their shirtsleeves, got out. I could see their hands and newly washed, wavy hair in the light from the door. The policeman standing by the door looked at me and smiled. They came in. As they went in, under the light I saw white hands, wavy hair, white faces, grimacing, gesturing, talking. With them was Brett. She looked very lovely and she was very much with them.

One of them saw Georgette and said: “I do declare. There is an actual harlot. I’m going to dance with her, Lett. You watch me.”

The tall dark one, called Lett, said: “Don’t you be rash.”

The wavy blond one answered: “Don’t you worry, dear.” And with them was Brett.

I was very angry. Somehow they always made me angry. I know they are supposed to be amusing, and you should be tolerant, but I wanted to swing on one, anyone, anything to shatter that superior, simpering composure. Instead, I walked down the street and had a beer at the bar at the next Bal. The beer was not good and I had a worse cognac to take the taste out of my mouth. When I came back to the Bal there was a crowd on the floor and Georgette was dancing with the tall blond youth, who danced big-hippily, carrying his head on one side, his eyes lifted as he danced. As soon as the music stopped another one of them asked her to dance. She had been taken up by them. I knew then that they would all dance with her. They are like that.

I sat down at a table. Cohn was sitting there. Frances was dancing. Mrs. Braddocks brought up somebody and introduced him as Robert Prentiss. He was from New York by way of Chicago, and was a rising new novelist. He had some sort of an English accent. I asked him to have a drink.

“Thanks so much,” he said, “I’ve just had one.”

“Have another.”

“Thanks, I will then.”

We got the daughter of the house over and each had a *fine à l’eau.*

“You’re from Kansas City, they tell me,” he said.

“Yes.”

“Do you find Paris amusing?”

“Yes.”

“Really?”

I was a little drunk. Not drunk in any positive sense but just

enough to be careless.

"For God's sake," I said, "yes. Don't you?"

"Oh, how charmingly you get angry," he said. "I wish I had that faculty."

I got up and walked over toward the dancing floor. Mrs. Braddocks followed me. "Don't be cross with Robert," she said. "He's still only a child, you know."

"I wasn't cross," I said. "I just thought perhaps I was going to throw up."

"Your fiancée is having a great success," Mrs. Braddocks looked out on the floor where Georgette was dancing in the arms of the tall, dark one, called Lett.

"Isn't she?" I said.

"Rather," said Mrs. Braddocks.

Cohn came up. "Come on, Jake," he said, "have a drink." We walked over to the bar. "What's the matter with you? You seem all worked up over something?"

"Nothing. This whole show makes me sick is all."

Brett came up to the bar.

"Hello, you chaps."

"Hello, Brett," I said. "Why aren't you tight?"

"Never going to get tight anymore. I say, give a chap a brandy and soda."

She stood holding the glass and I saw Robert Cohn looking at her. He looked a great deal as his compatriot must have looked when he saw the promised land. Cohn, of course, was much younger. But he had that look of eager, deserving expectation.

Brett was damned good looking. She wore a slipover jersey sweater and a tweed skirt, and her hair was brushed back like a boy's. She started all that. She was built with curves like the hull of a racing yacht, and you missed none of it with that wool jersey.

"It's a fine crowd you're with, Brett," I said.

"Aren't they lovely? And you, my dear. Where did you get it?"

“At the Napolitain.”

“And have you had a lovely evening?”

“Oh, priceless,” I said.

Brett laughed. “It’s wrong of you, Jake. It’s an insult to all of us. Look at Frances there, and Jo.”

This for Cohn’s benefit.

“It’s in restraint of trade,” Brett said. She laughed again.

“You’re wonderfully sober,” I said.

“Yes. Aren’t I? And when one’s with the crowd I’m with, one can drink in such safety, too.”

The music started and Robert Cohn said: “Will you dance this with me, Lady Brett?”

Brett smiled at him. “I’ve promised to dance this with Jacob,” she laughed. “You’ve a hell of a biblical name, Jake.”

“How about the next?” asked Cohn.

“We’re going,” Brett said. “We’ve a date up at Montmartre.”

Dancing, I looked over Brett’s shoulder and saw Cohn, standing at the bar, still watching her.

“You’ve made a new one there,” I said to her.

“Don’t talk about it. Poor chap. I never knew it till just now.”

“Oh, well,” I said. “I suppose you like to add them up.”

“Don’t talk like a fool.”

“You do.”

“Oh, well. What if I do?”

“Nothing,” I said. We were dancing to the accordion and someone was playing the banjo. It was hot and I felt happy. We passed close to Georgette dancing with another one of them.

“What possessed you to bring her?”

“I don’t know, I just brought her.”

“You’re getting damned romantic.”

“No, bored.”

“Now?”

“No, not now.”

"Let's get out of here. She's well taken care of."

"Do you want to?"

"Would I ask you if I didn't want to?"

We left the floor and I took my coat off a hanger on the wall and put it on. Brett stood by the bar. Cohn was talking to her. I stopped at the bar and asked them for an envelope. The patronne found one. I took a fifty-franc note from my pocket, put it in the envelope, sealed it, and handed it to the patronne.

"If the girl I came with asks for me, will you give her this?" I said. "If she goes out with one of those gentlemen, will you save this for me?"

"C'est entendu, Monsieur," the patronne said. "You go now? So early?"

"Yes," I said.

We started out the door. Cohn was still talking to Brett. She said good-night and took my arm. "Good-night, Cohn," I said. Outside in the street we looked for a taxi.

"You're going to lose your fifty francs," Brett said. "Oh, yes."

"No taxis."

"We could walk up to the Pantheon and get one."

"Come on and we'll get a drink in the pub next door and send for one."

"You wouldn't walk across the street." "Not if I could help it."

We went into the next bar and I sent a waiter for a taxi.

"Well," I said, "we're out away from them."

We stood against the tall zinc bar and did not talk and looked at each other. The waiter came and said the taxi was outside. Brett pressed my hand hard. I gave the waiter a franc and we went out. "Where should I tell him?" I asked.

"Oh, tell him to drive around."

I told the driver to go to the Pare Montsouris, and got in, and slammed the door. Brett was leaning back in the comer, her eyes closed. I got in and sat beside her. The cab started with a jerk.

“Oh, darling, I’ve been so miserable,” Brett said.

Chapter IV

The taxi went up the hill, passed the lighted square, then on into the dark, still climbing, then levelled out onto a dark street behind St. Etienne du Mont, went smoothly down the asphalt, passed the trees and the standing bus at the Place de la Contrescarpe, then turned onto the cobbles of the Rue Mouffetard. There were lighted bars and late open shops on each side of the street. We were sitting apart and we jolted close together going down the old street. Brett's hat was off. Her head was back. I saw her face in the lights from the open shops, then it was dark, then I saw her face clearly as we came out on the Avenue des Gobelins. The street was torn up and men were working on the car tracks by the light of acetylene flares. Brett's face was white and the long line of her neck showed in the bright light of the flares. The street was dark again and I kissed her. Our lips were tight together and then she turned away and pressed against the corner of the seat, as far away as she could get. Her head was down.

"Don't touch me," she said. "Please don't touch me."

"What's the matter?"

"I can't stand it."

"Oh, Brett."

"You mustn't. You must know. I can't stand it, that's all. Oh, darling, please understand!"

"Don't you love me?"

"Love you? I simply turn all to jelly when you touch me."

"Isn't there anything we can do about it?"

She was sitting up now. My arm was around her and she was leaning back against me, and we were quite calm. She was looking into my eyes with that way she had of looking that made you wonder whether she really saw out of her own eyes. They would look on and on after everyone else's eyes in the world would have stopped looking. She looked as though there were nothing on earth she would not look at like that, and really she was afraid of so many things.

"And there's not a damn thing we could do," I said.

"I don't know," she said. "I don't want to go through that hell again."

"We'd better keep away from each other."

"But, darling, I have to see you. It isn't all that you know."

"No, but it always gets to be."

"That's my fault. Don't we pay for all the things we do, though?"

She had been looking into my eyes all the time. Her eyes had different depths, sometimes they seemed perfectly flat. Now you could see all the way into them.

"When I think of the hell I've put chaps through. I'm paying for it all now."

"Don't talk like a fool," I said. "Besides, what happened to me is supposed to be funny. I never think about it."

"Oh, no. I'll lay you don't."

"Well, let's shut up about it."

"I laughed about it too, myself, once." She wasn't looking at me. "A friend of my brother's came home that way from Mons. It seemed like a hell of a joke. Chaps never know anything, do they?"

"No," I said. "Nobody ever knows anything."

I was pretty well through with the subject. At one time or another I had probably considered it from most of its various angles, including the one that certain injuries or imperfections are a subject of merriment while remaining quite serious for the person possessing them.

“It’s funny,” I said. “It’s very funny. And it’s a lot of fun, too, to be in love.”

“Do you think so?” her eyes looked flat again.

“I don’t mean fun that way. In a way it’s an enjoyable feeling.”

“No,” she said. “I think it’s hell on earth.”

“It’s good to see each other.”

“No. I don’t think it is.”

“Don’t you want to?”

“I have to.”

We were sitting now like two strangers. On the right was the Pare Montsouris. The restaurant where they have the pool of live trout and where you can sit and look out over the park was closed and dark. The driver leaned his head around.

“Where do you want to go?” I asked. Brett turned her head away.

“Oh, go to the Select.”

“Café Select,” I told the driver. “Boulevard Montparnasse.” We drove straight down, turning around the Lion de Belfort that guards the passing Montrouge trams. Brett looked straight ahead. On the Boulevard Raspail, with the lights of Montparnasse in sight, Brett said; “Would you mind very much if I asked you to do something?”

“Don’t be silly.”

“Kiss me just once more before we get there.”

When the taxi stopped I got out and paid. Brett came out putting on her hat. She gave me her hand as she stepped down. Her hand was shaky. “I say, do I look too much of a mess?” She pulled her man’s felt hat down and started in for the bar. Inside, against the bar and at tables, were most of the crowd who had been at the dance.

“Hello, you chaps,” Brett said. “I’m going to have a drink.”

“Oh, Brett! Brett!” the little Greek portrait painter, who called himself a duke, and whom everybody called Zizi, pushed up to her. “I got something fine to tell you.”

“Hello, Zizi,” Brett said.

“I want you to meet a friend,” Zizi said. A fat man came up.

“Count Mippipopolous, meet my friend Lady Ashley.”

“How do you do?” said Brett.

“Well, does your Ladyship have a good time here in Paris?” asked Count Mippipopolous, who wore an elk’s tooth on his watch chain.

“Rather,” said Brett.

“Paris is a fine town all right,” said the count. “But I guess you have pretty big doings yourself over in London.”

“Oh, yes,” said Brett. “Enormous.”

Braddocks called to me from a table. “Barnes,” he said, “have a drink. That girl of yours got in a frightful row.”

“What about?”

“Something the patronne’s daughter said. A corking row. She was rather splendid, you know. Showed her yellow card and demanded the patronne’s daughter’s too. I say it was a row.”

“What finally happened?”

“Oh, someone took her home. Not a bad looking girl. Wonderful command of the idiom. Do stay and have a drink.”

“No,” I said. “I must shove off. Seen Cohn?”

“He went home with Frances,” Mrs. Braddock put in.

“Poor chap, he looks awfully down,” Braddocks said.

“I dare say he is,” said Mrs. Braddocks.

“I have to shove off,” I said. “Good-night.”

I said good-night to Brett at the bar. The count was buying champagne. “Will you take a glass of wine with us, sir?” he asked.

“No. Thanks awfully. I have to go.”

“Really going?” Brett asked.

“Yes,” I said. “I’ve got a rotten headache.”

“I’ll see you tomorrow?”

“Come in at the office.”

“Hardly.”

"Well, where will I see you?"

"Anywhere around five o'clock."

"Make it the other side of town then."

"Good. I'll be at the Crillon at five."

"Try and be there," I said.

"Don't worry," Brett said. "I've never let you down, have I?"

"Heard from Mike?"

"Letter today."

"Good-night, sir," said the count.

I went out onto the sidewalk and walked down toward the Boulevard St. Michel, passed the tables of the Rotonde, still crowded, looked across the street at the Dome, its tables running out to the edge of the pavement. Someone waved at me from a table, I did not see who it was and went on. I wanted to get home. The Boulevard Montparnasse was deserted. Lavigne's was closed tight, and they were stacking the tables outside the Closerie des Lilas. I passed Ney's statue standing among the new-leaved chestnut trees in the arc light. There was a faded purple wreath leaning against the base. I stopped and read the inscription; from the Bonapartist Groups, some date; I forget. He looked very fine, Marshal Ney in his top-boots, gesturing with his sword among the green new horse chestnut leaves. My flat was just across the street, a little way down the Boulevard St. Michel.

There was a light in the concierge's room and I knocked on the door and she gave me my mail. I wished her good-night and went upstairs. There were two letters and some papers. I looked at them under the gas-light in the dining room. The letters were from the States. One was a bank statement. It showed a balance of $2432.60. I got out my checkbook and deducted four checks drawn since the first of the month, and discovered I had a balance of $1832.60. I wrote this on the back of the statement. The other letter was a wedding announcement. Mr. and Mrs. Aloysius Kirby announce the marriage of their daughter Katherine—I knew neither the girl nor

the man she was marrying. They must be circularizing the town. It was a funny name. I felt sure I could remember anybody with a name like Aloysius. It was a good Catholic name. There was a crest on the announcement. Like Zizi the Greek duke. And that count. The count was funny. Brett had a title, too. Lady Ashley. To hell with Brett. To hell with you, Lady Ashley.

I lit the lamp beside the bed, turned off the gas, and opened the wide windows. The bed was far back from the windows, and I sat with the windows open and undressed by the bed. Outside a night train, running on the streetcar tracks, went by carrying vegetables to the markets. They were noisy at night when you could not sleep. Undressing, I looked at myself in the mirror of the big armoire beside the bed. That was a typically French way to furnish a room. Practical, too, I suppose. Of all the ways to be wounded. I suppose it was funny. I put on my pajamas and got into bed. I had the two bullfight papers, and I took their wrappers off. One was orange. The other yellow. They would both have the same news, so whichever I read first would spoil the other. *Le Toril* was the better paper, so I started to read it. I read it all the way through, including the Petite Correspondance and the Cornigrams. I blew out the lamp. Perhaps I would be able to sleep.

My head started to work. The old grievance. Well, it was a rotten way to be wounded and flying on a joke front like the Italian. In the Italian hospital we were going to form a society. It had a funny name in Italian. I wonder what became of the others, the Italians. That was in the Ospedale Maggiore in Milano, Padiglione Ponte. The next building was the Padiglione Zonda. There was a statue of Ponte, or maybe it was Zonda. That was where the liaison colonel came to visit me. That was funny. That was about the first funny thing. I was all bandaged up. But they had told him about it. Then he made that wonderful speech: “You, a foreigner, an Englishman” (any foreigner was an Englishman) “have given more than your life.” What a speech! I would like to have it illuminated

to hang in the office. He never laughed. He was putting himself in my place, I guess. “Che mala fortuna! Che mala fortuna!”

I never used to realize it, I guess. I try and play it along and just not make trouble for people. Probably I never would have had any trouble if I hadn’t run into Brett when they shipped me to England. I suppose she only wanted what she couldn’t have. Well, people were that way. To hell with people. The Catholic Church had an awfully good way of handling all that. Good advice, anyway. Not to think about it. Oh, it was swell advice. Try and take it sometime. Try and take it.

I lay awake thinking and my mind jumping around. Then I couldn’t keep away from it, and I started to think about Brett and all the rest of it went away. I was thinking about Brett and my mind stopped jumping around and started to go in sort of smooth waves. Then all of a sudden I started to cry. Then after a while it was better and I lay in bed and listened to the heavy trams go by and way down the street, and then I went to sleep.

I woke up. There was a row going on outside. I listened and I thought I recognized a voice. I put on a dressing gown and went to the door. The concierge was talking downstairs. She was very angry. I heard my name and called down the stairs.

“Is that you, Monsieur Barnes?” the concierge called.

“Yes. It’s me.”

“There’s a species of woman here who’s waked the whole street up. What kind of a dirty business at this time of night! She says she must see you. I’ve told her you’re asleep.”

Then I heard Brett’s voice. Half asleep I had been sure it was Georgette. I don’t know why. She could not have known my address.

“Will you send her up, please?”

Brett came up the stairs. I saw she was quite drunk. “Silly thing to do,” she said. “Make an awful row. I say, you weren’t asleep, were you?”

“What did you think I was doing?”

“Don’t know. What time is it?”

I looked at the clock. It was half-past four. “Had no idea what hour it was,” Brett said. “I say, can a chap sit down? Don’t be cross, darling. Just left the count. He brought me here.”

“What’s he like?” I was getting brandy and soda and glasses.

“Just a little,” said Brett. “Don’t try and make me drunk. The count? Oh, rather. He’s quite one of us.”

“Is he a count?”

“Here’s how. I rather think so, you know. Deserves to be, anyhow. Knows hell’s own amount about people. Don’t know where he got it all. Owns a chain of sweetshops in the States.”

She sipped at her glass.

“Think he called it a chain. Something like that. Linked them all up. Told me a little about it. Damned interesting. He’s one of us, though. Oh, quite. No doubt. One can always tell.”

She took another drink.

“How do I buck on about all this? You don’t mind, do you? He’s putting up for Zizi, you know.”

“Is Zizi really a duke, too?”

“I shouldn’t wonder. Greek, you know. Rotten painter. I rather liked the count.”

“Where did you go with him?”

“Oh, everywhere. He just brought me here now. Offered me ten thousand dollars to go to Biarritz with him. How much is that in pounds?”

“Around two thousand.”

“Lot of money. I told him I couldn’t do it. He was awfully nice about it. Told him I knew too many people in Biarritz.”

Brett laughed.

“I say, you are slow on the uptake,” she said. I had only sipped my brandy and soda. I took a long drink.

“That’s better. Very funny,” Brett said. ‘Then he wanted me to

go to Cannes with him. Told him I knew too many people in Cannes. Monte Carlo. Told him I knew too many people in Monte Carlo. Told him I knew too many people everywhere. Quite true, too. So I asked him to bring me here."

She looked at me, her hand on the table, her glass raised. "Don't look like that," she said. "Told him I was in love with you. True, too. Don't look like that. He was damn nice about it. Wants to drive us out to dinner tomorrow night. Like to go?"

"Why not?"

"I'd better go now."

"Why?"

"Just wanted to see you. Damned silly idea. Want to get dressed and come down? He's got the car just up the street."

"The count?"

"Himself. And a chauffeur in livery. Going to drive me around and have breakfast in the Bois. Hampers. Got it all at Zelli's. Dozen bottles of Mumms. Tempt you?"

"I have to work in the morning," I said. "I'm too far behind you now to catch up and be any fun."

"Don't be an ass."

"Can't do it."

"Right. Send him a tender message?"

"Anything. Absolutely."

"Good-night, darling."

"Don't be sentimental."

"You make me ill."

We kissed good-night and Brett shivered. "I'd better go," she said. "Good-night, darling."

"You don't have to go."

"Yes."

We kissed again on the stairs and as I called for the cordon the concierge muttered something behind her door. I went back upstairs and from the open window watched Brett walking up the

street to the big limousine drawn up to the curb under the arc light. She got in and it started off. I turned around. On the table was an empty glass and a glass half-full of brandy and soda. I took them both out to the kitchen and poured the half-full glass down the sink. I turned off the gas in the dining room, kicked off my slippers sitting on the bed, and got into bed. This was Brett, that I had felt like crying about. Then I thought of her walking up the street and stepping into the car, as I had last seen her, and of course in a little while I felt like hell again. It is awfully easy to be hard-boiled about everything in the daytime, but at night it is another thing.

Chapter V

In the morning I walked down the Boulevard to the rue Souffiot for coffee and brioche. It was a fine morning. The horse chestnut trees in the Luxembourg gardens were in bloom. There was the pleasant early morning feeling of a hot day. I read the papers with the coffee and then smoked a cigarette. The Bower-women were coming up from the market and arranging their daily stock. Students went by going up to the law school, or down to the Sorbonne. The Boulevard was busy with trams and people going to work. I got on an S bus and rode down to the Madeleine, standing on the back platform. From the Madeleine I walked along the Boulevard des Capucines to the Opera, and up to my office. I passed the man with the jumping frogs and the man with the boxer toys. I stepped aside to avoid walking into the thread with which his girl assistant manipulated the boxers. She was standing looking away, the thread in her folded hands. The man was urging two tourists to buy. Three more tourists had stopped and were watching. I walked on behind a man who was pushing a roller that printed the name CINZANO on the sidewalk in damp letters. All along people were going to work. It felt pleasant to be going to work. I walked across the avenue and turned in to my office.

Upstairs in the office I read the French morning papers, smoked, and then sat at the typewriter and got off a good morning's work. At eleven o'clock I went over to the Quai d'Orsay in a taxi and went in and sat with about a dozen correspondents, while the foreign office mouthpiece, a young Nouvelle Revue Française diplomat in

horn-rimmed spectacles, talked and answered questions for half an hour. The President of the Council was in Lyons making a speech, or, rather he was on his way back. Several people asked questions to hear themselves talk and there were a couple of questions asked by news service men who wanted to know the answers. There was no news. I shared a taxi back from the Quai d'Orsay with Woolsey and Krum.

"What do you do nights, Jake?" asked Krum. "I never see you around."

"Oh, I'm over in the Quarter."

"I'm coming over some night. The Dingo. That's the great place, isn't it?"

"Yes. That, or this new dive, The Select."

"I've meant to get over," said Krum. "You know how it is, though, with a wife and kids."

"Playing any tennis?" Woolsey asked.

"Well, no," said Krum. "I can't say I've played any this year. I've tried to get away, but Sundays it's always rained, and the courts are so damned crowded."

"The Englishmen all have Saturday off," Woolsey said.

"Lucky beggars," said Krum. "Well, I'll tell you. Someday I'm not going to be working for an agency. Then I'll have plenty of time to get out in the country."

"That's the thing to do. Live out in the country and have a little car."

"I've been thinking some about getting a car next year."

I banged on the glass. The chauffeur stopped. "Here's my street," I said. "Come in and have a drink."

"Thanks, old man," Krum said. Woolsey shook his head. "I've got to file that line he got off this morning."

I put a two-franc piece in Krum's hand.

"You're crazy, Jake," he said. "This is on me."

"It's all on the office, anyway."

“Nope. I want to get it.”

I waved good-bye. Krum put his head out. “See you at the lunch on Wednesday.”

“You bet.”

I went to the office in the elevator. Robert Cohn was waiting for me. “Hello, Jake,” he said. “Going out to lunch?”

“Yes. Let me see if there is anything new.”

“Where will we eat?”

“Anywhere.”

I was looking over my desk. “Where do you want to eat?” “How about Wetzel’s? They’ve got good hors d’oeuvres.”

In the restaurant we ordered hors d’oeuvres and beer. The sommelier brought the beer, tall, beaded on the outside of the steins, and cold. There were a dozen different dishes of hors d’oeuvres.

“Have any fun last night?” I asked.

“No. I don’t think so.”

“How’s the writing going?”

“Rotten, I can’t get this second book going.”

“That happens to everybody.”

“Oh, I’m sure of that. It gets me worried, though.”

“Thought anymore about going to South America?”

“I mean that.”

“Well, why don’t you start off?”

“Frances.”

“Well,” I said, “take her with you.”

“She wouldn’t like it. That isn’t the sort of thing she likes. She likes a lot of people around.”

“Tell her to go to hell.”

“I can’t. I’ve got certain obligations to her.”

He shoved the sliced cucumbers away and took a pickled herring.

“What do you know about Lady Brett Ashley, Jake?”

“Her name’s Lady Ashley. Brett’s her own name. She’s a nice girl,” I said. “She’s getting a divorce and she’s going to marry Mike Campbell. He’s over in Scotland now. Why?”

“She’s a remarkably attractive woman.”

“Isn’t she?”

“There’s a certain quality about her, a certain fineness. She seems to be absolutely fine and straight.”

“She’s very nice.”

“I don’t know how to describe the quality,” Cohn said. “I suppose it’s breeding.”

“You sound as though you liked her pretty well.”

“I do. I shouldn’t wonder if I were in love with her.”

“She’s a drunk,” I said. “She’s in love with Mike Campbell, and she’s going to marry him. He’s going to be rich as hell someday.”

“I don’t believe she’ll ever marry him.”

“Why not?”

“I don’t know. I just don’t believe it. Have you known her a long time?”

“Yes,” I said. “She was a V. A. D. in a hospital I was in during the war.”

“She must have been just a kid then.”

“She’s thirty-four now.”

“When did she marry Ashley?”

“During the war. Her own true love had just kicked off with the dysentery.”

“You talk sort of bitter.”

“Sorry. I didn’t mean to. I was just trying to give you the facts.”

“I don’t believe she would marry anybody she didn’t love.”

“Well,” I said. “She’s done it twice.”

“I don’t believe it.”

“Well,” I said, “don’t ask me a lot of fool questions if you don’t like the answers.”

“I didn’t ask you that.”

“You asked me what I knew about Brett Ashley.”

“I didn’t ask you to insult her.”

“Oh, go to hell.”

He stood up from the table his face white, and stood there white and angry behind the little plates of hors d’oeuvres.

“Sit down,” I said. “Don’t be a fool.”

“You’ve got to take that back.”

“Oh, cut out the prep school stuff.”

“Take it back.”

“Sure. Anything. I never heard of Brett Ashley. How’s that?”

“No. Not that. About me going to hell.”

“Oh, don’t go to hell,” I said. “Stick around. We’re just starting lunch.”

Cohn smiled again and sat down. He seemed glad to sit down. What the hell would he have done if he hadn’t sat down? “You say such damned insulting things, Jake.”

“I’m sorry. I’ve got a nasty tongue. I never mean it when I say nasty things.”

“I know it,” Cohn said. “You’re really about the best friend I have, Jake.”

God help you, I thought. “Forget what I said,” I said out loud. “I’m sorry.”

“It’s all right. It’s fine. I was just sore for a minute.”

“Good. Let’s get something else to eat.”

After we finished the lunch we walked up to the café de la Paix and had coffee. I could feel Cohn wanted to bring up Brett again, but I held him off it. We talked about one thing and another, and I left him to come to the office.

Chapter VI

At five o'clock I was in the Hotel Crillon waiting for Brett. She was not there, so I sat down and wrote some letters. They were not very good letters but I hoped their being on Crillon stationery would help them. Brett did not turn up, so about quarter to six I went down to the bar and had a Jack Rose with George the barman. Brett had not been in the bar either, and so I looked for her upstairs on my way out, and took a taxi to the Café Select. Crossing the Seine I saw a string of barges being towed empty down the current, riding high, the bargemen at the sweeps as they came toward the bridge. The river looked nice. It was always pleasant crossing bridges in Paris.

The taxi rounded the statue of the inventor of the semaphore engaged in doing same, and turned up the Boulevard Raspail, and I sat back to let that part of the ride pass. The Boulevard Raspail always made dull riding. It was like a certain stretch on the P.L.M. between Fontainebleau and Montereau that always made me feel bored and dead and dull until it was over. I suppose it is some association of ideas that makes those dead places in a journey. There are other streets in Paris as ugly as the Boulevard Raspail. It is a street I do not mind walking down at all. But I cannot stand to ride along it. Perhaps I had read something about it once. That was the way Robert Cohn was about all of Paris. I wondered where Cohn got that incapacity to enjoy Paris. Possibly from Mencken. Mencken hates Paris, I believe. So many young men get their likes and dislikes from Mencken.

The taxi stopped in front of the Rotonde. No matter what café in Montparnasse you ask a taxi-driver to bring you to from the right bank of the river, they always take you to the Rotonde. Ten years from now it will probably be the Dome. It was near enough, anyway. I walked past the sad tables of the Rotonde to the Select. There were a few people inside at the bar, and outside, alone, sat Harvey Stone. He had a pile of saucers in front of him, and he needed a shave.

"Sit down," said Harvey, "I've been looking for you."

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing. Just looking for you."

"Been out to the races?"

"No. Not since Sunday."

"What do you hear from the States?"

"Nothing. Absolutely nothing."

"What's the matter?"

"I don't know. I'm through with them. I'm absolutely through with them."

He leaned forward and looked me in the eye.

"Do you want to know something, Jake?"

"Yes."

"I haven't had anything to eat for five days."

I figured rapidly back in my mind. It was three days ago that Harvey had won two hundred francs from me shaking poker dice in the New York Bar.

"What's the matter?"

"No money. Money hasn't come," he paused. "I tell you it's strange, Jake. When I'm like this I just want to be alone. I want to stay in my own room. I'm like a cat."

I felt in my pocket.

"Would a hundred help you any, Harvey?"

"Yes."

"Come on. Let's go and eat."

“There’s no hurry. Have a drink.”

“Better eat.”

“No. When I get like this I don’t care whether I eat or not.”

We had a drink. Harvey added my saucer to his own pile.

“Do you know Mencken, Harvey?”

“Yes. Why?”

“What’s he like?”

“He’s all right. He says some pretty funny things. Last time I had dinner with him we talked about Hoffenheimer. ‘The trouble is,’ he said, ‘he’s a garter snapper.’ That’s not bad.”

“That’s not bad.”

“He’s through now,” Harvey went on. “He’s written about all the things he knows, and now he’s on all the things he doesn’t know.”

“I guess he’s all right,” I said. “I just can’t read him.”

“Oh, nobody reads him now,” Harvey said, “except the people that used to read the Alexander Hamilton Institute.”

“Well,” I said. “That was a good thing, too.”

“Sure,” said Harvey. So we sat and thought deeply for a while.

“Have another port?”

“All right,” said Harvey.

“There comes Cohn,” I said. Robert Cohn was crossing the street.

“That moron,” said Harvey. Cohn came up to our table. “Hello, you bums,” he said.

“Hello, Robert,” Harvey said. “I was just telling Jake here that you’re a moron.”

“What do you mean?”

“Tell us right off. Don’t think. What would you rather do if you could do anything you wanted?”

Cohn started to consider.

“Don’t think. Bring it right out.”

“I don’t know,” Cohn said. “What’s it all about, anyway?”

“I mean what would you rather do. What comes into your head first. No matter how silly it is.”

“I don’t know,” Cohn said. “I think I’d rather play football again with what I know about handling myself, now.”

“I misjudged you,” Harvey said. “You’re not a moron. You’re only a case of arrested development.”

“You’re awfully funny, Harvey,” Cohn said. “Someday somebody will push your face in.”

Harvey Stone laughed. “You think so. They won’t, though. Because it wouldn’t make any difference to me. I’m not a fighter.”

“It would make a difference to you if anybody did it.”

“No, it wouldn’t. That’s where you make your big mistake. Because you’re not intelligent.”

“Cut it out about me.”

“Sure,” said Harvey. “It doesn’t make any difference to me. You don’t mean anything to me.”

“Come on, Harvey,” I said. “Have another porto.”

“No,” he said. “I’m going up the street and eat. See you later, Jake.”

He walked out and up the street. I watched him crossing the street through the taxis, small, heavy, slowly sure of himself in the traffic.

“He always gets me sore,” Cohn said. “I can’t stand him.”

“I like him,” I said. “I’m fond of him. You don’t want to get sore at him.”

“I know it,” Cohn said. “He just gets on my nerves.”

“Write this afternoon?”

“No. I couldn’t get it going. It’s harder to do than my first book. I’m having a hard time handling it.”

The sort of healthy conceit that he had when he returned from America early in the spring was gone. Then he had been sure of his work, only with these personal longings for adventure. Now the sureness was gone. Somehow I feel I have not shown Robert Cohn clearly. The reason is that until he fell in love with Brett, I never heard him make one remark that would, in any way, detach him

from other people. He was nice to watch on the tennis court, he had a good body, and he kept it in shape; he handled his cards well at bridge, and he had a funny sort of undergraduate quality about him. If he were in a crowd nothing he said stood out. He wore what used to be called polo shirts at school, and may be called that still, but he was not professionally youthful. I do not believe he thought about his clothes much. Externally he had been formed at Princeton. Internally he had been moulded by the two women who had trained him. He had a nice, boyish sort of cheerfulness that had never been trained out of him, and I probably have not brought it out. He loved to win at tennis. He probably loved to win as much as Lenglen, for instance. On the other hand, he was not angry at being beaten. When he fell in love with Brett his tennis game went all to pieces. People beat him who had never had a chance with him. He was very nice about it.

Anyhow, we were sitting on the terrace of the café Select, and Harvey Stone had just crossed the street.

"Come on up to the Lilas," I said.

"I have a date."

"What time?"

"Frances is coming here at seven-fifteen."

"There she is."

Frances Clyne was coming toward us from across the street. She was a very tall girl who walked with a great deal of movement. She waved and smiled. We watched her cross the street.

"Hello," she said, "I'm so glad you're here, Jake. I've been wanting to talk to you."

"Hello, Frances," said Cohn. He smiled.

"Why, hello, Robert. Are you here?" She went on, talking rapidly. "I've had the damdest time. This one"—shaking her head at Cohn—"didn't come home for lunch."

"I wasn't supposed to."

"Oh, I know. But you didn't say anything about it to the cook.

Then I had a date myself, and Paula wasn't at her office. I went to the Ritz and waited for her, and she never came, and of course I didn't have enough money to lunch at the Ritz—"

"What did you do?"

"Oh, went out, of course." She spoke in a sort of imitation joyful manner. "I always keep my appointments. No one keeps theirs, nowadays. I ought to know better. How are you, Jake, anyway?"

"Fine."

"That was a fine girl you had at the dance, and then went off with that Brett one."

"Don't you like her?" Cohn asked.

"I think she's perfectly charming. Don't you?"

Cohn said nothing.

"Look, Jake. I want to talk with you. Would you come over with me to the Dome? You'll stay here, won't you, Robert? Come on, Jake."

We crossed the Boulevard Montpamasse and sat down at a table. A boy came up with the *Paris Times,* and I bought one and opened it.

"What's the matter, Frances?"

"Oh, nothing," she said, "except that he wants to leave me."

"How do you mean?"

"Oh, he told everyone that we were going to be married, and I told my mother and everyone, and now he doesn't want to do it."

"What's the matter?"

"He's decided he hasn't lived enough. I knew it would happen when he went to New York."

She looked up, very bright-eyed and trying to talk inconsequentially.

"I wouldn't marry him if he doesn't want to. Of course I wouldn't. I wouldn't marry him now for anything. But it does seem to me to be a little late now, after we've waited three years, and I've just gotten my divorce."

I said nothing.

"We were going to celebrate so, and instead we've just had scenes. It's so childish. We have dreadful scenes, and he cries and begs me to be reasonable, but he says he just can't do it."

"It's rotten luck."

"I should say it is rotten luck. I've wasted two years and a half on him now. And I don't know now if any man will ever want to marry me. Two years ago I could have married anybody I wanted, down at Cannes. All the old ones that wanted to marry somebody chic and settle down were crazy about me. Now I don't think I could get anybody."

"Sure, you could marry anybody."

"No, I don't believe it. And I'm fond of him, too. And I'd like to have children. I always thought we'd have children."

She looked at me very brightly. "I never liked children much, but I don't want to think I'll never have them. I always thought I'd have them and then like them."

"He's got children."

"Oh, yes. He's got children, and he's got money, and he's got a rich mother, and he's written a book, and nobody will publish my stuff, nobody at all. It isn't bad, either. And I haven't got any money at all. I could have had alimony, but I got the divorce the quickest way."

She looked at me again very brightly.

"It isn't right. It's my own fault and it's not, too. I ought to have known better. And when I tell him he just cries and says he can't marry. Why can't he marry? I'd be a good wife. I'm easy to get along with. I leave him alone. It doesn't do any good."

"It's a rotten shame."

"Yes, it is a rotten shame. But there's no use talking about it, is there? Come on, let's go back to the café."

"And of course there isn't anything I can do."

"No. Just don't let him know I talked to you. I know what he

wants." Now for the first time she dropped her bright, terribly cheerful manner. "He wants to go back to New York alone, and be there when his book comes out so when a lot of little chickens like it. That's what he wants."

"Maybe they won't like it. I don't think he's that way. Really."

"You don't know him like I do, Jake. That's what he wants to do. I know it. I know it. That's why he doesn't want to marry. He wants to have a big triumph this fall all by himself."

"Want to go back to the café?"

"Yes. Come on."

We got up from the table—they had never brought us a drink—and started across the street toward the Select, where Cohn sat smiling at us from behind the marble-topped table.

"Well, what are you smiling at?" Frances asked him. "Feel pretty happy?"

"I was smiling at you and Jake with your secrets."

"Oh, what I've told Jake isn't any secret. Everybody will know it soon enough. I only wanted to give Jake a decent version."

"What was it? About your going to England?"

"Yes, about my going to England. Oh, Jake! I forgot to tell you. I'm going to England."

"Isn't that fine!"

"Yes, that's the way it's done in the very best families. Robert's sending me. He's going to give me two hundred pounds and then I'm going to visit friends. Won't it be lovely? The friends don't know about it, yet."

She turned to Cohn and smiled at him. He was not smiling now.

"You were only going to give me a hundred pounds, weren't you, Robert? But I made him give me two hundred. He's really very generous. Aren't you, Robert?"

I do not know how people could say such terrible things to Robert Cohn. There are people to whom you could not say insulting things. They give you a feeling that the world would be destroyed,

would actually be destroyed before your eyes, if you said certain things. But here was Cohn taking it all. Here it was, all going on right before me, and I did not even feel an impulse to try and stop it. And this was friendly joking to what went on later.

"How can you say such things, Frances?" Cohn interrupted.

"Listen to him. I'm going to England. I'm going to visit friends. Ever visit friends that didn't want you? Oh, they'll have to take me, all right. 'How do you do, my dear? Such a long time since we've seen you. And how is your dear mother?' Yes, how is my dear mother? She put all her money into French war bonds. Yes, she did. Probably the only person in the world that did. 'And what about Robert?' or else very careful talking around Robert. 'You must be most careful not to mention him, my dear. Poor Frances has had a most unfortunate experience.' Won't it be fun, Robert? Don't you think it will be fun, Jake?"

She turned to me with that terribly bright smile. It was very satisfactory to her to have an audience for this.

"And where are you going to be, Robert? It's my own fault, all right. Perfectly my own fault. When I made you get rid of your little secretary on the magazine I ought to have known you'd get rid of me the same way. Jake doesn't know about that. Should I tell him?"

"Shut up, Frances, for God's sake."

"Yes, I'll tell him. Robert had a little secretary on the magazine. Just the sweetest little thing in the world, and he thought she was wonderful, and then I came along and he thought I was pretty wonderful, too. So I made him get rid of her, and he had brought her to Provincetown from Carmel when he moved the magazine, and he didn't even pay her fare back to the coast. All to please me. He thought I was pretty fine, then. Didn't you, Robert?

"You mustn't misunderstand, Jake, it was absolutely platonic with the secretary. Not even platonic. Nothing at all, really. It was just that she was so nice. And he did that just to please me. Well, I suppose that we that live by the sword shall perish by the sword.

Isn't that literary, though? You want to remember that for your next book, Robert.

"You know Robert is going to get material for a new book. Aren't you, Robert? That's why he's leaving me. He's decided I don't film well. You see, he was so busy all the time that we were living together, writing on this book, that he doesn't remember anything about us. So now he's going out and get some new material. Well, I hope he gets something frightfully interesting.

"Listen, Robert, dear. Let me tell you something. You won't mind, will you? Don't have scenes with your young ladies. Try not to. Because you can't have scenes without crying, and then you pity yourself so much you can't remember what the other person's said. You'll never be able to remember any conversations that way. Just try and be calm. I know it's awfully hard. But remember, it's for literature. We all ought to make sacrifices for literature. Look at me. I'm going to England without a protest. All for literature. We must all help young writers. Don't you think so, Jake? But you're not a young writer. Are you, Robert? You're thirty-four. Still, I suppose that is young for a great writer. Look at Hardy. Look at Anatole France. He just died a little while ago. Robert doesn't think he's any good, though. Some of his French friends told him. He doesn't read French very well himself. He wasn't a good writer like you are, was he, Robert? Do you think he ever had to go and look for material? What do you suppose he said to his mistresses when he wouldn't marry them? I wonder if he cried, too? Oh, I've just thought of something." She put her gloved hand up to her lips. "I know the real reason why Robert won't marry me, Jake. It's just come to me. They've sent it to me in a vision in the Café Select. Isn't it mystic? Someday they'll put a tablet up. Like at Lourdes. Do you want to hear, Robert? I'll tell you. It's so simple. I wonder why I never thought about it. Why, you see, Robert's always wanted to have a mistress, and if he doesn't marry me, why, then he's had one. She was his mistress for over two years. See how it is? And if he marries

me, like he's always promised he would, that would be the end of all the romance. Don't you think that's bright of me to figure that out? It's true, too. Look at him and see if it's not. Where are you going, Jake?"

"I've got to go in and see Harvey Stone a minute."

Cohn looked up as I went in. His face was white. Why did he sit there? Why did he keep on taking it like that?

As I stood against the bar looking out I could see them through the window. Frances was talking on to him, smiling brightly, looking into his face each time she asked: "Isn't it so, Robert?" Or maybe she did not ask that now. Perhaps she said something else. I told the barman I did not want anything to drink and went out through the side door. As I went out the door I looked back through the two thicknesses of glass and saw them sitting there. She was still talking to him. I went down a side street to the Boulevard Raspail. A taxi came along and I got in and gave the driver the address of my flat.

Chapter VII

As I started up the stairs the concierge knocked on the glass of the door of her lodge, and as I stopped she came out. She had some letters and a telegram.

"Here is the post. And there was a lady here to see you."

"Did she leave a card?"

"No. She was with a gentleman. It was the one who was here last night. In the end I find she is very nice."

"Was she with a friend of mine?"

"I don't know. He was never here before. He was very large. Very, very large. She was very nice. Very, very nice. Last night she was, perhaps, a little—" She put her head on one hand and rocked it up and down. "I'll speak perfectly frankly, Monsieur Barnes. Last night I found her not so gentille. Last night I formed another idea of her. But listen to what I tell you. She is très, très gentille. She is of very good family. It is a thing you can see."

"They did not leave any word?"

"Yes. They said they would be back in an hour."

"Send them up when they come."

"Yes, Monsieur Barnes. And that lady, that lady there is someone. An eccentric, perhaps, but quelqu'une, quelqu'une!"

The concierge, before she became a concierge, had owned a drink-selling concession at the Paris racecourses. Her life-work lay in the pelouse, but she kept an eye on the people of the pesage, and she took great pride in telling me which of my guests were well brought up, which were of good family, who were sportsmen, a

French word pronounced with the accent on the men. The only trouble was that people who did not fall into any of those three categories were very liable to be told there was no one home chez Barnes. One of my friends, an extremely underfed-looking painter, who was obviously to Madame Duzinell neither well brought up, of good family, nor a sportsman, wrote me a letter asking if I could get him a pass to get by the concierge so he could come up and see me occasionally in the evenings.

I went up to the flat wondering what Brett had done to the concierge. The wire was a cable from Bill Gorton, saying he was arriving on the *France.* I put the mail on the table, went back to the bedroom, undressed and had a shower. I was rubbing down when I heard the doorbell pull. I put on a bathrobe and slippers and went to the door. It was Brett. Back of her was the count. He was holding a great bunch of roses.

"Hello, darling," said Brett. "Aren't you going to let us in?"

"Come on. I was just bathing."

"Aren't you the fortunate man. Bathing."

"Only a shower. Sit down, Count Mippipopolous. What will you drink?"

"I don't know whether you like flowers, sir," the count said, "but I took the liberty of just bringing these roses."

"Here, give them to me." Brett took them. "Get me some water in this, Jake." I filled the big earthenware jug with water in the kitchen, and Brett put the roses in it, and placed them in the centre of the dining room table.

"I say. We have had a day."

"You don't remember anything about a date with me at the Crillon?"

"No. Did we have one? I must have been blind."

"You were quite drunk, my dear," said the count.

"Wasn't I, though? And the count's been a brick, absolutely."

"You've got hell's own drag with the concierge now."

“I ought to have. Gave her two hundred francs.”

“Don’t be a damned fool.”

“His,” she said, and nodded at the count.

“I thought we ought to give her a little something for last night. It was very late.”

“He’s wonderful,” Brett said. “He remembers everything that’s happened.”

“So do you, my dear.”

“Fancy,” said Brett. “Who’d want to? I say, Jake, *do* we get a drink?”

“You get it while I go in and dress. You know where it is.”

“Rather.”

While I dressed I heard Brett put down glasses and then a siphon, and then heard them talking. I dressed slowly, sitting on the bed. I felt tired and pretty rotten. Brett came in the room, a glass in her hand, and sat on the bed.

“What’s the matter, darling? Do you feel rocky?”

She kissed me coolly on the forehead.

“Oh, Brett, I love you so much.”

“Darling,” she said. Then: “Do you want me to send him away?”

“No. He’s nice.”

“I’ll send him away.”

“No, don’t.”

“Yes, I’ll send him away.”

“You can’t just like that.”

“Can’t I, though? You stay here. He’s mad about me, I tell you.”

She was gone out of the room. I lay face down on the bed. I was having a bad time. I heard them talking but I did not listen. Brett came in and sat on the bed.

“Poor old darling.” She stroked my head.

“What did you say to him?” I was lying with my face away from her. I did not want to see her.

“Sent him for champagne. He loves to go for champagne.”

Then later: “Do you feel better, darling? Is the head any better?”

“It’s better.”

“Lie quiet. He’s gone to the other side of town.”

“Couldn’t we live together, Brett? Couldn’t we just live together?”

“I don’t think so. I’d just *tromper* you with everybody. You couldn’t stand it.”

“I stand it now.”

“That would be different. It’s my fault, Jake. It’s the way I’m made.”

“Couldn’t we go off in the country for a while?”

“It wouldn’t be any good. I’ll go if you like. But I couldn’t live quietly in the country. Not with my own true love.”

“I know.”

“Isn’t it rotten? There isn’t any use my telling you I love you.”

“You know I love you.”

“Let’s not talk. Talking’s all bilge. I’m going away from you, and then Michael’s coming back.”

“Why are you going away?”

“Better for you. Better for me.”

“When are you going?”

“Soon as I can.”

“Where?”

“San Sebastian.”

“Can’t we go together?”

“No. That would be a hell of an idea after we’d just talked it out.”

“We never agreed.”

“Oh, you know as well as I do. Don’t be obstinate, darling.”

“Oh, sure,” I said. “I know you’re right. I’m just low, and when I’m low I talk like a fool.”

I sat up, leaned over, found my shoes beside the bed and put them on. I stood up.

“Don’t look like that, darling.”

“How do you want me to look?”

“Oh, don’t be a fool. I’m going away tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow?”

“Yes. Didn’t I say so? I am.”

“Let’s have a drink, then. The count will be back.”

“Yes. He should be back. You know he’s extraordinary about buying champagne. It means any amount to him.”

We went into the dining room. I took up the brandy bottle and poured Brett a drink and one for myself. There was a ring at the bell-pull. I went to the door and there was the count. Behind him was the chauffeur carrying a basket of champagne.

“Where should I have him put it, sir?” asked the count.

“In the kitchen,” Brett said.

“Put it in there, Henry,” the count motioned. “Now go down and get the ice.” He stood looking after the basket inside the kitchen door. “I think you’ll find that’s very good wine,” he said. “I know we don’t get much of a chance to judge good wine in the States now, but I got this from a friend of mine that’s in the business.”

“Oh, you always have someone in the trade,” Brett said.

“This fellow raises the grapes. He’s got thousands of acres of them.”

“What’s his name?” asked Brett. “Veuve Cliquot?”

“No,” said the count. “Mumms, He’s a baron.”

“Isn’t it wonderful,” said Brett. “We all have titles. Why haven’t you a title, Jake?”

“I assure you, sir,” the count put his hand on my arm. “It never does a man any good. Most of the time it costs you money.”

“Oh, I don’t know. It’s damned useful sometimes,” Brett said. “I’ve never known it to do me any good.”

“You haven’t used it properly. I’ve had hell’s own amount of credit on mine.”

“Do sit down, count,” I said. “Let me take that stick.”

The count was looking at Brett across the table under the gaslight. She was smoking a cigarette and flicking the ashes on the rug. She saw me notice it. “I say, Jake, I don’t want to ruin your rugs. Can’t you give a chap an ashtray?”

I found some ashtrays and spread them around. The chauffeur came up with a bucket full of salted ice. “Put two bottles in it, Henry,” the count called.

“Anything else, sir?”

“No. Wait down in the car.” He turned to Brett and to me. “We’ll want to ride out to the Bois for dinner?”

“If you like,” Brett said. “I couldn’t eat a thing.”

“I always like a good meal,” said the count.

“Should I bring the wine in, sir?” asked the chauffeur.

“Yes. Bring it in, Henry,” said the count. He took out a heavy pigskin cigar-case and offered it to me. “Like to try a real American cigar?”

“Thanks,” I said. “I’ll finish the cigarette.”

He cut off the end of his cigar with a gold cutter he wore on one end of his watch-chain.

“I like a cigar to really draw,” said the count. “Half the cigars you smoke don’t draw.”

He lit the cigar, puffed at it, looking across the table at Brett. “And when you’re divorced, Lady Ashley, then you won’t have a title.”

“No. What a pity.”

“No,” said the count. “You don’t need a title. You got class all over you.”

“Thanks. Awfully decent of you.”

“I’m not joking you,” the count blew a cloud of smoke. “You got the most class of anybody I ever seen. You got it. That’s all.”

“Nice of you,” said Brett. “Mummy would be pleased. Couldn’t you write it out, and I’ll send it in a letter to her.”

“I’d tell her, too,” said the count. “I’m not joking you. I never

joke people. Joke people and you make enemies. That's what I always say."

"You're right," Brett said. "You're terribly right. I always joke people and I haven't a friend in the world. Except Jake here."

"You don't joke him."

"That's it."

"Do you, now?" asked the count. "Do you joke him?"

Brett looked at me and wrinkled up the corners of her eyes.

"No," she said. "I wouldn't joke him."

"See," said the count. "You don't joke him."

"This is a hell of a dull talk," Brett said. "How about some of that champagne?"

The count reached down and twirled the bottles in the shiny bucket. "It isn't cold, yet. You're always drinking, my dear. Why don't you just talk?"

"I've talked too ruddy much. I've talked myself all out to Jake."

"I should like to hear you really talk, my dear. When you talk to me you never finish your sentences at all."

"Leave 'em for you to finish. Let anyone finish them as they like."

"It is a very interesting system," the count reached down and gave the bottles a twirl. "Still I would like to hear you talk some time."

"Isn't he a fool?" Brett asked.

"Now," the count brought up a bottle. "I think this is cool."

I brought a towel and he wiped the bottle dry and held it up. "I like to drink champagne from magnums. The wine is better but it would have been too hard to cool." He held the bottle, looking at it. I put out the glasses.

"I say. You might open it," Brett suggested. "Yes, my dear. Now I'll open it."

It was amazing champagne.

"I say that is wine," Brett held up her glass. "We ought to toast

something. ‘Here’s to royalty.’”

“This wine is too good for toast-drinking, my dear. You don’t want to mix emotions up with a wine like that. You lose the taste.”

Brett’s glass was empty.

“You ought to write a book on wines, count,” I said.

“Mr. Barnes,” answered the count, “all I want out of wines is to enjoy them.”

“Let’s enjoy a little more of this,” Brett pushed her glass forward. The count poured very carefully. “There, my dear. Now you enjoy that slowly, and then you can get drunk.”

“Drunk? Drunk?”

“My dear, you are charming when you are drunk.”

“Listen to the man.”

“Mr. Barnes,” the count poured my glass full. “She is the only lady I have ever known who was as charming when she was drunk as when she was sober.”

“You haven’t been around much, have you?”

“Yes, my dear. I have been around very much. I have been around a very great deal.”

“Drink your wine,” said Brett. “We’ve all been around. I dare say Jake here has seen as much as you have.”

“My dear, I am sure Mr. Barnes has seen a lot. Don’t think I don’t think so, sir. I have seen a lot, too.”

“Of course you have, my dear,” Brett said. “I was only ragging.”

“I have been in seven wars and four revolutions,” the count said.

“Soldiering?” Brett asked.

“Sometimes, my dear. And I have got arrow wounds. Have you ever seen arrow wounds?”

“Let’s have a look at them.”

The count stood up, unbuttoned his vest, and opened his shirt. He pulled up the undershirt onto his chest and stood, his chest black, and big stomach muscles bulging under the light.

“You see them?”

Below the line where his ribs stopped were two raised white welts. “See on the back where they come out.” Above the small of the back were the same two scars, raised as thick as a finger.

“I say. Those are something.”

“Clean through.”

The count was tucking in his shirt.

“Where did you get those?” I asked.

“In Abyssinia. When I was twenty-one years old.”

“What were you doing?” asked Brett. “Were you in the army?”

“I was on a business trip, my dear.”

“I told you he was one of us. Didn’t I?” Brett turned to me. “I love you, count. You’re a darling.”

“You make me very happy, my dear. But it isn’t true.”

“Don’t be an ass.”

“You see, Mr. Barnes, it is because I have lived very much that now I can enjoy everything so well. Don’t you find it like that?”

“Yes. Absolutely.”

“I know,” said the count. ‘That is the secret. You must get to know the values.”

“Doesn’t anything ever happen to your values?” Brett asked. “No. Not anymore.”

“Never fall in love?”

“Always,” said the count. “I am always in love.” “What does that do to your values?”

“That, too, has got a place in my values.”

“You haven’t any values. You’re dead, that’s all.”

“No, my dear. You’re not right. I’m not dead at all.”

We drank three bottles of the champagne and the count left the basket in my kitchen. We dined at a restaurant in the Bois. It was a good dinner. Food had an excellent place in the count’s values. So did wine. The count was in fine form during the meal. So was Brett. It was a good party.

“Where would you like to go?” asked the count after dinner.

We were the only people left in the restaurant. The two waiters were standing over against the door. They wanted to go home.

"We might go up on the hill," Brett said. "Haven't we had a splendid party?"

The count was beaming. He was very happy.

"You are very nice people," he said. He was smoking a cigar again. "Why don't you get married, you two?"

"We want to lead our own lives," I said.

"We have our careers," Brett said. "Come on. Let's get out of this."

"Have another brandy," the count said.

"Get it on the hill."

"No. Have it here where it is quiet."

"You and your quiet," said Brett. "What is it men feel about quiet?"

"We like it," said the count. "Like you like noise, my dear."

"All right," said Brett. "Let's have one."

"Sommelier!" the count called.

"Yes, sir."

"What is the oldest brandy you have?"

"Eighteen eleven, sir."

"Bring us a bottle."

"I say. Don't be ostentatious. Call him off, Jake."

"Listen, my dear. I get more value for my money in old brandy than in any other antiquities."

"Got many antiquities?"

"I got a houseful."

Finally we went up to Montmartre. Inside Zelli's it was crowded, smoky, and noisy. The music hit you as you went in. Brett and I danced. It was so crowded we could barely move. The nigger drummer waved at Brett. We were caught in the jam, dancing in one place in front of him.

"Hahre you?"

“Great.”

“Thaats good.”

He was all teeth and lips.

“He’s a great friend of mine,” Brett said. “Damn good drummer.”

The music stopped and we started toward the table where the count sat. Then the music started again and we danced. I looked at the count. He was sitting at the table smoking a cigar. The music stopped again.

“Let’s go over.”

Brett started toward the table. The music started and again we danced, tight in the crowd.

“You are a rotten dancer, Jake. Michael’s the best dancer I know.”

“He’s splendid.”

“He’s got his points.”

“I like him,” I said. “I’m damned fond of him.”

“I’m going to marry him,” Brett said. “Funny. I haven’t thought about him for a week.”

“Don’t you write him?”

“Not I. Never write letters.”

“I’ll bet he writes to you.”

“Rather. Damned good letters, too.”

“When are you going to get married?”

“How do I know? As soon as we can get the divorce. Michael’s trying to get his mother to put up for it.”

“Could I help you?”

“Don’t be an ass. Michael’s people have loads of money.”

The music stopped. We walked over to the table. The count stood up.

“Very nice,” he said. “You looked very, very nice.”

“Don’t you dance, count?” I asked.

“No. I’m too old.”

“Oh, come off it,” Brett said.

“My dear, I would do it if I would enjoy it. I enjoy to watch you dance.”

“Splendid,” Brett said. “I’ll dance again for you some time. I say. What about your little friend, Zizi?”

“Let me tell you. I support that boy, but I don’t want to have him around.”

“He is rather hard.”

“You know I think that boy’s got a future. But personally I don’t want him around.”

“Jake’s rather the same way.”

“He gives me the willys.”

“Well,” the count shrugged his shoulders. “About his future you can’t ever tell. Anyhow, his father was a great friend of my father.”

“Come on. Let’s dance.” Brett said.

We danced. It was crowded and close.

“Oh, darling,” Brett said, “I’m so miserable.”

I had that feeling of going through something that has all happened before. “You were happy a minute ago.”

The drummer shouted: “You can’t two time—”

“It’s all gone.”

“What’s the matter’?”

“I don’t know. I just feel terribly.”

“. . . . . .” the drummer chanted. Then turned to his sticks.

“Want to go?”

I had the feeling as in a nightmare of it all being something repeated, something I had been through and that now I must go through again.

“. . . . . .” the drummer sang softly.

“Let’s go,” said Brett. “You don’t mind.”

“. . . . . .” the drummer shouted and grinned at Brett.

“All right,” I said. We got out from the crowd. Brett went to the dressing room.

“Brett wants to go,” I said to the count. He nodded. “Does she?

That's fine. You take the car. I'm going to stay here for a while, Mr. Barnes."

We shook hands.

"It was a wonderful time," I said. "I wish you would let me get this." I took a note out of my pocket.

"Mr. Barnes, don't be ridiculous," the count said.

Brett came over with her wrap on. She kissed the count and put her hand on his shoulder to keep him from standing up. As we went out the door I looked back and there were three girls at his table. We got into the big car. Brett gave the chauffeur the address of her hotel.

"No, don't come up," she said at the hotel. She had rung and the door was unlatched.

"Really?"

"No. Please."

"Good-night, Brett," I said. "I'm sorry you feel rotten."

"Good-night, Jake. Good-night, darling. I won't see you again."

We kissed standing at the door. She pushed me away. We kissed again. "Oh, don't!" Brett said.

She turned quickly and went into the hotel. The chauffeur drove me around to my flat. I gave him twenty francs and he touched his cap and said: "Good-night, sir," and drove off. I rang the bell. The door opened and I went upstairs and went to bed.

BOOK II

Chapter VIII

I did not see Brett again until she came back from San Sebastian. One card came from her from there. It had a picture of the Concha, and said: “Darling. Very quiet and healthy. Love to all the chaps. Brett.”

Nor did I see Robert Cohn again. I heard Frances had left for England and I had a note from Cohn saying he was going out in the country for a couple of weeks, he did not know where, but that he wanted to hold me to the fishing trip in Spain we had talked about last winter. I could reach him always, he wrote, through his bankers.

Brett was gone, I was not bothered by Cohn’s troubles, I rather enjoyed not having to play tennis, there was plenty of work to do, I went often to the races, dined with friends, and put in some extra time at the office getting things ahead so I could leave it in charge of my secretary when Bill Gorton and I should shove off to Spain the end of June. Bill Gorton arrived, put up a couple of days at the flat and went off to Vienna. He was very cheerful and said the States were wonderful. New York was wonderful. There had been a grand theatrical season and a whole crop of great young light heavyweights. Anyone of them was a good prospect to grow up, put on weight and trim Dempsey. Bill was very happy. He had made a lot of money on his last book, and was going to make a lot more. We had a good time while he was in Paris, and then he went off to Vienna. He was coming back in three weeks and we would leave for Spain to get in some fishing and go to the fiesta at Pamplona. He

wrote that Vienna was wonderful. Then a card from Budapest: "Jake, Budapest is wonderful." Then I got a wire: "Back on Monday."

Monday evening he turned up at the flat. I heard his taxi stop and went to the window and called to him; he waved and started upstairs carrying his bags. I met him on the stairs, and took one of the bags.

"Well," I said, "I hear you had a wonderful trip."

"Wonderful," he said. "Budapest is absolutely wonderful."

"How about Vienna?"

"Not so good, Jake. Not so good. It seemed better than it was."

"How do you mean?" I was getting glasses and a siphon.

"Tight, Jake. I was tight."

"That's strange. Better have a drink."

Bill rubbed his forehead. "Remarkable thing," he said. "Don't know how it happened. Suddenly it happened."

"Last long?"

"Four days, Jake. Lasted just four days."

"Where did you go?"

"Don't remember. Wrote you a postcard. Remember that perfectly."

"Do anything else?"

"Not so sure. Possible."

"Go on. Tell me about it."

"Can't remember. Tell you anything I could remember."

"Go on. Take that drink and remember."

"Might remember a little," Bill said. "Remember something about a prize fight. Enormous Vienna prize fight. Had a nigger in it. Remember the nigger perfectly."

"Go on."

"Wonderful nigger. Looked like Tiger Flowers, only four times as big. All of a sudden everybody started to throw things. Not me. Nigger'd just knocked local boy down. Nigger put up his glove.

Wanted to make a speech. Awful noble-looking nigger. Started to make a speech. Then local white boy hit him. Then he knocked white boy cold. Then everybody commenced to throw chairs. Nigger went home with us in our car. Couldn't get his clothes. Wore my coat. Remember the whole thing now. Big sporting evening."

"What happened?"

"Loaned the nigger some clothes and went around with him to try and get his money. Claimed nigger owed them money on account of wrecking hall. Wonder who translated? Was it me?"

"Probably it wasn't you."

"You're right. Wasn't me at all. Was another fellow. Think we called him the local Harvard man. Remember him now. Studying music."

"How'd you come out?"

"Not so good, Jake. Injustice everywhere. Promoter claimed nigger promised let local boy stay. Claimed nigger violated contract. Can't knock out Vienna boy in Vienna. 'My God, Mister Gorton,' said nigger, 'I didn't do nothing in there for forty minutes but try and let him stay. That white boy musta ruptured himself swinging at me. I never did hit him.'"

"Did you get any money?"

"No money, Jake. All we could get was nigger's clothes. Somebody took his watch, too. Splendid nigger. Big mistake to have come to Vienna. Not so good, Jake. Not so good."

"What became of the nigger?"

"Went back to Cologne. Lives there. Married. Got a Family. Going to write me a letter and send me the money I loaned him. Wonderful nigger. Hope I gave him the right address."

"You probably did."

"Well, anyway, let's eat," said Bill. "Unless you want me to tell you some more travel stories."

"Go on."

"Let's eat."

We went downstairs and out onto the Boulevard St. Michel in the warm June evening.

"Where will we go?"

"Want to eat on the island?"

"Sure."

We walked down the Boulevard. At the juncture of the Rue Denfert-Rochereau with the Boulevard is a statue of two men in flowing robes.

"I know who they are." Bill eyed the monument. "Gentlemen who invented pharmacy. Don't try and fool me on Paris."

We went on.

"Here's a taxidermist's," Bill said. "Want to buy anything? Nice stuffed dog?"

"Come on," I said. "You're pie-eyed."

"Pretty nice stuffed dogs," Bill said. "Certainly brighten up your flat."

"Come on."

"Just one stuffed dog. I can take 'em or leave 'em alone. But listen, Jake. Just one stuffed dog."

"Come on."

"Mean everything in the world to you after you bought it. Simple exchange of values. You give them money. They give you a stuffed dog."

"We'll get one on the way back."

"All right. Have it your own way. Road to hell paved with unbought stuffed dogs. Not my fault."

We went on.

"How'd you feel that way about dogs so sudden?"

"Always felt that way about dogs. Always been a great lover of stuffed animals."

We stopped and had a drink.

"Certainly like to drink," Bill said. "You ought to try it some Jake."

"You're about a hundred and forty-four ahead of me."

"Ought not to daunt you. Never be daunted. Secret of my success. Never been daunted. Never been daunted in public."

"Where were you drinking?"

"Stopped at the Crillon. George made me a couple of Jack Roses. George's a great man. Know the secret of his success? Never been daunted."

"You'll be daunted after about three more pernods."

"Not in public. If I begin to feel daunted I'll go off by myself. I'm like a cat that way."

"When did you see Harvey Stone?"

"At the Crillon. Harvey was just a little daunted. Hadn't eaten for three days. Doesn't eat anymore. Just goes off like a cat. Pretty sad."

"He's all right."

"Splendid. Wish he wouldn't keep going off like a cat, though. Makes me nervous."

"What'll we do tonight?"

"Doesn't make any difference. Only let's not get daunted. Suppose they got any hard-boiled eggs here? If they had hard-boiled eggs here we wouldn't have to go all the way down to the island to eat."

"Nix," I said. "We're going to have a regular meal."

"Just a suggestion," said Bill. "Want to start now?"

"Come on."

We started on again down the Boulevard. A horse cab passed us. Bill looked at it.

"See that horse cab? Going to have that horse cab stuffed for you for Christmas. Going to give all my friends stuffed animals. I'm a nature-writer."

A taxi passed, someone in it waved, then banged for the driver to stop. The taxi backed up to the curb. In it was Brett.

"Beautiful lady," said Bill. "Going to kidnap us."

“Hullo!” Brett said. “Hullo!”

“This is Bill Gorton. Lady Ashley.”

Brett smiled at Bill. “I say I’m just back. Haven’t bathed even. Michael comes in tonight.”

“Good. Come on and eat with us, and we’ll all go to meet him.”

“Must clean myself.”

“Oh, rot! Come on.”

“Must bathe. He doesn’t get in till nine.”

“Come and have a drink, then, before you bathe.” “Might do that. Now you’re not talking rot.”

We got in the taxi. The driver looked around. “Stop at the nearest bistro,” I said.

“We might as well go to the Closerie,” Brett said. “I can’t drink these rotten brandies.”

“Closerie des Lilas.’ Brett turned to Bill.

“Have you been in this pestilential city long?”

“Just got in today from Budapest.”

“How was Budapest?”

“Wonderful. Budapest was wonderful.”

“Ask him about Vienna.”

“Vienna,” said Bill, “is a strange city.”

“Very much like Paris,” Brett smiled at him, wrinkling the corners of her eyes.

“Exactly,” Bill said. “Very much like Paris at this moment.”

“You *have* a good start.”

Sitting out on the terraces of the Lilas Brett ordered a whiskey and soda, I took one, too, and Bill took another pernod.

“How are you, Jake?”

“Great,” I said. “I’ve had a good time.”

Brett looked at me. “I was a fool to go away,” she said. “One’s an ass to leave Paris.”

“Did you have a good time?”

“Oh, all right. Interesting. Not frightfully amusing.”

“See anybody?”

“No, hardly anybody. I never went out.”

“Didn’t you swim?”

“No. Didn’t do a thing.”

“Sounds like Vienna,” Bill said.

Brett wrinkled up the corners of her eyes at him. “So that’s the way it was in Vienna.”

“It was like everything in Vienna.”

Brett smiled at him again.

“You’ve a nice friend, Jake.”

“He’s all right,” I said. “He’s a taxidermist.”

“That was in another country,” Bill said. “And besides all the animals were dead.”

“One more,” Brett said, “and I must run. Do send the waiter for a taxi.”

“There’s a line of them. Right out in front.”

“Good.”

We had the drink and put Brett into her taxi.

“Mind you’re at the Select around ten. Make him come. Michael will be there.”

“We’ll be there,” Bill said. The taxi started and Brett waved.

“Quite a girl,” Bill said. “She’s damned nice. Who’s Michael?”

“The man she’s going to marry.”

“Well, well,” Bill said. “That’s always just the stage I meet anybody. What’ll I send them? Think they’d like a couple of stuffed race horses?”

“We better eat.”

“Is she really Lady something or other?” Bill asked in the taxi on our way down to the lIe Saint Louis.

“Oh, yes. In the studbook and everything.”

“Well, well.”

We ate dinner at Madame Lecomte’s restaurant on the far side of the island. It was crowded with Americans and we had to stand up

and wait for a place. Someone had put it in the American Women's Club list as a quaint restaurant on the Paris quais as yet untouched by Americans, so we had to wait forty-five minutes for a table. Bill had eaten at the restaurant in 1918, and right after the armistice, and Madame Lecomte made a great fuss over seeing him.

"Doesn't get us a table, though," Bill said. "Grand woman, though."

We had a good meal, a roast chicken, new green beans, mashed potatoes, a salad, and some apple pie and cheese.

"You've got the world here all right," Bill said to Madame Lecomte. She raised her hand. "Oh, my God!"

"You'll be rich."

"I hope so."

After the coffee and a *fine* we got the bill, chalked up the same as ever on a slate, that was doubtless one of the "quaint" features, paid it, shook hands, and went out.

"You never come here anymore, Monsieur Barnes," Madame Lecomte said.

"Too many compatriots."

"Come at lunchtime. It's not crowded then."

"Good. I'll be down soon."

We walked along under the trees that grew out over the river on the Quai d'Orleans side of the island. Across the river were the broken walls of old houses that were being torn down.

"They're going to cut a street through."

"They would," Bill said.

We walked on and circled the island. The river was dark and a bateau mouche went by, all bright with lights, going fast and quiet up and out of sight under the bridge. Down the river was Notre Dame squatting against the night sky. We crossed to the left bank of the Seine by the wooden footbridge from the Quai de Bethune, and stopped on the bridge and looked down the river at Notre Dame. Standing on the bridge the island looked dark, the houses were high

against the sky, and the trees were shadows.

"It's pretty grand," Bill said. "God, I love to get back."

We leaned on the wooden rail of the bridge and looked up the river to the lights of the big bridges. Below the water was smooth and black. It made no sound against the piles of the bridge. A man and a girl passed us. They were walking with their arms around each other.

We crossed the bridge and walked up the Rue du Cardinal Lemoine. It was steep walking, and we went all the way up to the Place Contrescarpe. The arc light shone through the leaves of the trees in the square, and underneath the trees was an S bus ready to start. Music came out of the door of the Negre Joyeux. Through the window of the Café Aux Amateurs I saw the long zinc bar. Outside on the terrace working people were drinking. In the open kitchen of the Amateurs a girl was cooking potato- chips in oil. There was an iron pot of stew. The girl ladled some onto a plate for an old man who stood holding a bottle of red wine in one hand.

"Want to have a drink?"

"No," said Bill. "I don't need it."

We turned to the right off the Place Contrescarpe, walking along smooth narrow streets with high old houses on both sides. Some of the houses jutted out toward the street. Others were cut back. We carne onto the Rue du Pot de Fer and followed it along until it brought us to the rigid north and south of the Rue Saint Jacques and then walked south, past Val de Grâce, set back behind the courtyard and the iron fence, to the Boulevard du Port Royal.

"What do you want to do?" I asked. "Go up to the café and see Brett and Mike?"

"Why not?"

We walked along Port Royal until it became Montparnasse, and then on past the Lilas, Lavigne's, and all the little café s, Damoy's, crossed the street to the Rotonde, past its lights and tables to the Select.

Michael carne toward us from the tables. He was tanned and healthy-looking.

"Hel-lo, Jake," he said. "Hel-lo! Hel-lo! How are you, old lad?"

"You look very fit, Mike."

"Oh, I am. I'm frightfully fit. I've done nothing but walk. Walk all day long. One drink a day with my mother at tea."

Bill had gone into the bar. He was standing talking with Brett, who was sitting on a high stool, her legs crossed. She had no stockings on.

"It's good to see you, Jake," Michael said. "I'm a little tight you know. Amazing, isn't it? Did you see my nose?"

There was a patch of dried blood on the bridge of his nose.

"An old lady's bags did that," Mike said. "I reached up to help her with them and they fell on me."

Brett gestured at him from the bar with her cigarette-holder and wrinkled the corners of her eyes.

"An old lady," said Mike. "Her bags *fell* on me. Let's go in and see Brett. I say, she is a piece. You *are* a lovely lady, Brett. Where did you get that hat?"

"Chap bought it for me. Don't you like it?"

"It's a dreadful hat. Do get a good hat."

"Oh, we've so much money now," Brett said. "I say, haven't you met Bill yet? You *are* a lovely host, Jake."

She turned to Mike. "This is Bill Gorton. This drunkard is Mike Campbell. Mr. Campbell is an undischarged bankrupt."

"Aren't I, though? You know I met my ex-partner yesterday in London. Chap who did me in."

"What did he say?"

"Bought me a drink. I thought I might as well take it. I say, Brett, you *are* a lovely piece. Don't you think she's beautiful?"

"Beautiful. With this nose?"

"It's a lovely nose. Go on, point it at me. Isn't she a lovely piece?"

“Couldn’t we have kept the man in Scotland?”

“I say, Brett, let’s turn in early.”

“Don’t be indecent, Michael. Remember there are ladies at this bar.”

“Isn’t she a lovely piece? Don’t you think so, Jake?”

“There’s a fight tonight,” Bill said. “Like to go?”

“Fight,” said Mike. “Who’s fighting?”

“Ledoux and somebody.”

“He’s very good, Ledoux,” Mike said. “I’d like to see it, rather”—he was making an effort to pull himself together—“but I can’t go. I had a date with this thing here. I say, Brett, do get a new hat.”

Brett pulled the felt hat down far over one eye and smiled out from under it. “You two run along to the fight. I’ll have to be taking Mr. Campbell home directly.”

“I’m not tight,” Mike said. “Perhaps just a little. I say, Brett, you are a lovely piece.”

“Go on to the fight,” Brett said. “Mr. Campbell’s getting difficult. What are these outbursts of affection, Michael?”

“I say, you are a lovely piece.”

We said good-night. “I’m sorry I can’t go,” Mike said. Brett laughed. I looked back from the door. Mike had one hand on the bar and was leaning toward Brett, talking. Brett was looking at him quite coolly, but the corners of her eyes were smiling.

Outside on the pavement I said: “Do you want to go to the fight?”

“Sure,” said Bill. “If we don’t have to walk.”

“Mike was pretty excited about his girlfriend,” I said in the taxi.

“Well,” said Bill. “You can’t blame him such a hell of a lot.”

Chapter IX

The Ledoux-Kid Francis fight was the night of the 20th of June. It was a good fight. The morning after the fight I had a letter from Robert Cohn, written from Hendaye. He was having a very quiet time, he said, bathing, playing some golf and much bridge. Hendaye had a splendid beach, but he was anxious to start on the fishing trip. When would I be down? If I would buy him a double-tapered line he would pay me when I came down.

That same morning I wrote Cohn from the office that Bill and I would leave Paris on the 25th unless I wired him otherwise, and would meet him at Bayonne, where we could get a bus over the mountains to Pamplona. The same evening about seven o'clock I stopped in at the Select to see Michael and Brett. They were not there, and I went over to the Dingo. They were inside sitting at the bar.

"Hello, darling." Brett put out her hand.

"Hello, Jake," Mike said. "I understand I was tight last night."

"Weren't you, though," Brett said. "Disgraceful business."

"Look," said Mike, "when do you go down to Spain? Would you mind if we came down with you?"

"It would be grand."

"You wouldn't mind, really? I've been at Pamplona, you know. Brett's mad to go. You're sure we wouldn't just be a bloody nuisance?"

"Don't talk like a fool."

"I'm a little tight, you know. I wouldn't ask you like this if I

weren't. You're sure you don't mind?"

"Oh, shut up, Michael," Brett said. "How can the man say he'd mind now? I'll ask him later."

"But you don't mind, do you?"

"Don't ask that again unless you want to make me sore. Bill and I go down on the morning of the 25th."

"By the way, where is Bill?" Brett asked.

"He's out at Chantilly dining with some people."

"He's a good chap."

"Splendid chap," said Mike. "He is, you know."

"You don't remember him," Brett said.

"I do. Remember him perfectly. Look, Jake, we'll come down the night of the 25th. Brett can't get up in the morning."

"Indeed not!"

"If our money comes and you're sure you don't mind."

"It will come, all right. I'll see to that."

"Tell me what tackle to send for."

"Get two or three rods with reels, and lines, and some flies."

"I won't fish," Brett put in.

"Get two rods, then, and Bill won't have to buy one."

"Right," said Mike. "I'll send a wire to the keeper."

"Won't it be splendid," Brett said. "Spain! We *will* have fun."

"The 25th. When is that?"

"Saturday."

"We *will* have to get ready."

"I say," said Mike, "I'm going to the barber's."

"I must bathe," said Brett. "Walk up to the hotel with me, Jake. Be a good chap."

"We *have* got the loveliest hotel," Mike said. "I think it's a brothel!"

"We left our bags here at the Dingo when we got in, and they asked us at this hotel if we wanted a room for the afternoon only. Seemed frightfully pleased we were going to stay all night."

"*I* believe it's a brothel," Mike said. "And I should know."

"Oh, shut it and go and get your hair cut."

Mike went out. Brett and I sat on at the bar.

"Have another?"

"Might."

"I needed that," Brett said.

We walked up the Rue Delambre.

"I haven't seen you since I've been back," Brett said.

"No."

"How *are* you, Jake?"

"Fine."

Brett looked at me. "I say," she said, "is Robert Cohn going on this trip?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Don't you think it will be a bit rough on him?"

"Why should it?"

"Who did you think I went down to San Sebastian with?"

"Congratulations," I said.

We walked along.

"What did you say that for?"

"I don't know. What would you like me to say?"

We walked along and turned a corner.

"He behaved rather well, too. He gets a little dull."

"Does he?"

"I rather thought it would be good for him."

"You might take up social service."

"Don't be nasty."

"I won't."

"Didn't you really know?"

"No," I said. "I guess I didn't think about it."

"Do you think it will be too rough on him?"

"That's up to him," I said. "Tell him you're coming. He can always not come."

“I’ll write him and give him a chance to pull out of it.”

I did not see Brett again until the night of the 24th of June.

“Did you hear from Cohn?”

“Rather. He’s keen about it.”

“My God!”

“I thought it was rather odd myself.”

“Says he can’t wait to see me.”

“Does he think you’re coming alone?”

“No. I told him we were all coming down together. Michael and all.”

“He’s wonderful.”

“Isn’t he?”

They expected their money the next day. We arranged to meet at Pamplona. They would go directly to San Sebastian and take the train from there. We would all meet at the Montoya in Pamplona. If they did not turn up on Monday at the latest we would go on ahead up to Burguete in the mountains, to start fishing. There was a bus to Burguete. I wrote out an itinerary so they could follow us.

Bill and I took the morning train from the Gare d’Orsay. It was a lovely day, not too hot, and the country was beautiful from the start. We went back into the diner and had breakfast. Leaving the dining car I asked the conductor for tickets for the first service.

“Nothing until the fifth.”

“What’s this?”

There were never more than two servings of lunch on that train, and always plenty of places for both of them.

“They’re all reserved,” the dining car conductor said. “There will be a fifth service at three-thirty.”

“This is serious,” I said to Bill. “Give him ten francs.”

“Here,” I said. “We want to eat in the first service.”

The conductor put the ten francs in his pocket.

“Thank you,” he said. “I would advise you gentlemen to get some sandwiches. All the places for the first four services were

reserved at the office of the company."

"You'll go a long way, brother," Bill said to him in English.

"I suppose if I'd given you five francs you would have advised us to jump off the train."

"Comment?"

"Go to hell!" said Bill. "Get the sandwiches made and a bottle of wine. You tell him, Jake."

"And send it up to the next car." I described where we were. In our compartment were a man and his wife and their young son.

"I suppose you're Americans, aren't you?" the man asked.

"Having a good trip?"

"Wonderful," said Bill.

"That's what you want to do. Travel while you're young. Mother and I always wanted to get over, but we had to wait a while."

"You could have come over ten years ago, if you'd wanted to," the wife said. "What you always said was: 'See America first!' I will say we've seen a good deal, take it one way and another."

"Say, there's plenty of Americans on this train," the husband said. "They've got seven cars of them from Dayton, Ohio. They've been on a pilgrimage to Rome, and now they're going down to Biarritz and Lourdes."

"So, that's what they are. Pilgrims. Goddam Puritans," Bill said. "What part of the States you boys from?"

"Kansas City," I said. "He's from Chicago."

"You both going to Biarritz?"

"No. We're going fishing in Spain."

"Well, I never cared for it, myself. There's plenty that do out where I come from, though. We got some of the best fishing in the State of Montana. I've been out with the boys, but I never cared for it any."

"Mighty little fishing you did on them trips," his wife said. He winked at us.

"You know how the ladies are. If there's a jug goes along, or a

case of beer, they think it's hell and damnation."

"That's the way men are," his wife said to us. She smoothed her comfortable lap. "I voted against prohibition to please him, and because I like a little beer in the house, and then he talks that way. It's a wonder they ever find anyone to marry them."

"Say," said Bill, "do you know that gang of Pilgrim Fathers have cornered the dining car until half past three this afternoon?"

"How do you mean? They can't do a thing like that."

"You try and get seats."

"Well, mother, it looks as though we better go back and get another breakfast."

She stood up and straightened her dress.

"Will you boys keep an eye on our things? Come on, Hubert." They all three went up to the wagon restaurant. A little while after they were gone a steward went through announcing the first service, and pilgrims, with their priests, commenced filing down the corridor. Our friend and his family did not come back. A waiter passed in the corridor with our sandwiches and the bottle of Chablis, and we called him in.

"You're going to work today," I said.

He nodded his head. "They start now, at ten-thirty."

"When do we eat?"

"Huh! When do I eat?"

He left two glasses for the bottle, and we paid him for the sandwiches and tipped him.

"I'll get the plates," he said, "or bring them with you."

We ate the sandwiches and drank the Chablis and watched the country out of the window. The grain was just beginning to ripen and the fields were full of poppies. The pastureland was green, and there were fine trees, and sometimes big rivers and chateaux off in the trees.

At Tours we got off and bought another bottle of wine, and when we got back in the compartment the gentleman from Montana

and his wife and his son, Hubert, were sitting comfortably.

"Is there good swimming in Biarritz?" asked Hubert.

"That boy's just crazy till he can get in the water," his mother said. "It's pretty hard on youngsters travelling."

'There's good swimming," I said. "But it's dangerous when it's rough."

"Did you get a meal?" Bill asked.

"We sure did. We set right there when they started to come in, and they must have just thought we were in the party. One of the waiters said something to us in French, and then they just sent three of them back."

"They thought we were snappers, all right," the man said. "It certainly shows you the power of the Catholic Church. It's a pity you boys ain't Catholics. You could get a meal, then, all right."

"I am," I said. "That's what makes me so sore."

Finally at a quarter past four we had lunch. Bill had been rather difficult at the last. He buttonholed a priest who was corning back with one of the returning streams of pilgrims.

"When do us Protestants get a chance to eat, father?"

"I don't know anything about it. Haven't you got tickets?"

"It's enough to make a man join the Klan," Bill said. The priest looked back at him.

Inside the dining car the waiters served the fifth successive table d'hôte meal. The waiter who served us was soaked through. His white jacket was purple under the arms.

"He must drink a lot of wine."

"Or wear purple undershirts."

"Let's ask him."

"No. He's too tired."

The train stopped for half an hour at Bordeaux and we went out through the station for a little walk. There was not time to get in to the town. Afterward we passed through the Landes and watched the sun set. There were wide fire-gaps cut through the pines, and you

could look up them like avenues and see wooded hills way off. About seven-thirty we had dinner and watched the country through the open window in the diner. It was all sandy pine country full of heather. There were little clearings with houses in them, and once in a while we passed a sawmill. It got dark and we could feel the country hot and sandy and dark outside of the window, and about nine o'clock we got into Bayonne. The man and his wife and Hubert all shook hands with us. They were going on to LaNegresse to change for Biarritz.

"Well, I hope you have lots of luck," he said. "Be careful about those bullfights."

"Maybe we'll see you at Biarritz," Hubert said.

We got off with our bags and rod-cases and passed through the dark station and out to the lights and the line of cabs and hotel buses. There, standing with the hotel runners, was Robert Cohn. He did not see us at first. Then he started forward.

"Hello, Jake. Have a good trip?" "Fine," I said.

"This is Bill Grundy."

"How are you?"

"Come on," said Robert. "I've got a cab." He was a little near-sighted. I had never noticed it before. He was looking at Bill, trying to make him out. He was shy, too.

"We'll go up to my hotel. It's all right. It's quite nice."

We got into the cab, and the cabman put the bags up on the seat beside him and climbed up and cracked his whip, and we drove over the dark bridge and into the town.

"I'm awfully glad to meet you," Robert said to Bill. "I've heard so much about you from Jake and I've read your books. Did you get my line, Jake?"

The cab stopped in front of the hotel and we all got out and went in. It was a nice hotel, and the people at the desk were very cheerful, and we each had a good small room.

Chapter X

In the morning it was bright, and they were sprinkling the streets of the town, and we all had breakfast in a café. Bayonne is a nice town. It is like a very clean Spanish town and it is on a big river. Already, so early in the morning, it was very hot on the bridge across the river. We walked out on the bridge and then took a walk through the town.

I was not at all sure Mike's rods would come from Scotland in time, so we hunted a tackle store and finally bought a rod for Bill upstairs over a dry goods store. The man who sold the tackle was out, and we had to wait for him to come back. Finally he came in, and we bought a pretty good rod cheap, and *two* landing nets.

We went out into the street again and took a look at the cathedral. Cohn made some remark about it being a very good example of something or other, I forget what. It seemed like a nice cathedral, nice and dim, like Spanish churches. Then we went up past the old fort and out to the local Syndicat d'lnitiative office, where the bus was supposed to start from. There they told us the bus service did not start until the 1st of July. We found out at the tourist office what we ought to pay for a motor car to Pamplona and hired one at a big garage just around the corner from the Municipal Theatre for four hundred francs. The car was to pick us up at the hotel in forty minutes, and we stopped at the café on the square where we had eaten breakfast, and had a beer. It was hot, but the town had a cool, fresh, early-morning smell and it was pleasant sitting in the café. A breeze started to blow, and you could

feel that the air came from the sea. There were pigeons out in the square, and the houses were a yellow, sun-baked color, and I did not want to leave the café. But we had to go to the hotel zto get our bags packed and pay the bill. We paid for the beers, we matched and I think Cohn paid, and went up to the hotel. It was only sixteen francs apiece for Bill and me, with ten per cent added for the service, and we had the bags sent down and waited for Robert Cohn. While we were waiting I saw a cockroach on the parquet floor that must have been at least three inches long. I pointed him out to Bill and then put my shoe on him. We agreed he must have just come in from the garden. It was really an awfully clean hotel.

Cohn came down, finally, and we all went out to the car. It was a big, closed car, with a driver in a white duster with blue collar and cuffs, and we had him put the back of the car down. He piled in the bags and we started off up the street and out of the town. We passed some lovely gardens and had good look back at the town, and then we were out in the country, green and rolling, and the road climbing all the time. We passed lots of Basques with oxen, or cattle, hauling carts along the road, and nice farmhouses, low roofs, and all white-plastered. In the Basque country the land all looks very rich and green and the houses and villages look well-off and clean. Every village had a pelota court and on some of them kids were playing in the hot sun. There were signs on the walls of the churches saying it was forbidden to play pelota against them, and the houses in the villages had red tiled roofs, and then the road turned off and commenced to climb and we were going way up close along a hillside, with a valley below and hills stretched off back toward the sea. You couldn't see the sea. It was too far away. You could see only hills and more hills, and you knew where the sea was.

We crossed the Spanish frontier. There was a little stream and a bridge, and Spanish carabineers, with patent leather Bonaparte hats, and short guns on their backs, on one side, and on the other

fat Frenchmen in kepis and mustaches. They only opened one bag and took the passports in and looked at them. There was a general store and inn on each side of the line. The chauffeur had to go in and fill out some papers about the car and we got out and went over to the stream to see if there were any trout. Bill tried to talk some Spanish to one of the carabineers, but it did not go very well. Robert Cohn asked, pointing with his finger, if there were any trout in the stream, and the carabineer said yes, but not many.

I asked him if he ever fished, and he said no, that he didn't care for it.

Just then an old man with long, sunburned hair and beard, and clothes that looked as though they were made of gunny sacking, came striding up to the bridge. He was carrying a long staff, and he had a kid slung on his back, tied by the four legs, the head hanging down.

The carabineer waved him back with his sword. The man turned without saying anything, and started back up the white road into Spain.

"What's the matter with the old one?" I asked.

"He hasn't got any passport."

I offered the guard a cigarette. He took it and thanked me.

"What will he do?" I asked.

The guard spat in the dust.

"Oh, he'll just wade across the stream."

"Do you have much smuggling?"

"Oh," he said, "they go through."

The chauffeur came out, folding up the papers and putting them in the inside pocket of his coat. We all got in the car and it started up the white dusty road into Spain. For a while the country was much as it had been; then, climbing all the time, we crossed the top of a Col, the road winding back and forth on itself, and then it was really Spain. There were long brown mountains and a few pines and far-off forests of beech trees on some of the mountainsides. The

road went along the summit of the Col and then dropped down, and the driver had to honk, and slow up, and turn out to avoid running into two donkeys that were sleeping in the road. We came down out of the mountains and through an oak forest, and there were white cattle grazing in the forest. Down below there were grassy plains and clear streams, and then we crossed a stream and went through a gloomy little village, and started to climb again. We climbed up and up and crossed another high Col and turned along it, and the road ran down to the right, and we saw a whole new range of mountains off to the south, all brown and baked-looking and furrowed in strange shapes.

After a while we came out of the mountains, and there were trees along both sides of the road, and a stream and ripe fields of grain, and the road went on, very white and straight ahead, and then lifted to a little rise, and off on the left was a hill with an old castle, with buildings close around it and a field of grain going right up to the walls and shifting in the wind. I was up in front with the driver and I turned around. Robert Cohn was asleep, but Bill looked and nodded his head. Then we crossed a wide plain, and there was a big river off on the right shining in the sun from between the line of trees, and away off you could see the plateau of Pamplona rising out of the plain, and the walls of the city, and the great brown cathedral, and the broken skyline of the other churches. In back of the plateau were the mountains, and every way you looked there were other mountains, and ahead the road stretched out white across the plain going toward Pamplona.

We came into the town on the other side of the plateau, the road slanting up steeply and dustily with shade trees on both sides, and then levelling out through the new part of town they are building up outside the old walls. We passed the bullring, high and white and concrete-looking in the sun, and then came into the big square by a side street and stopped in front of the Hotel Montoya.

The driver helped us down with the bags. There was a crowd of

kids watching the car, and the square was hot, and the trees were green, and the flags hung on their staffs, and it was good to get out of the sun and under the shade of the arcade that runs all the way around the square. Montoya was glad to see us, and shook hands and gave us good rooms looking out on the square, and then we washed and cleaned up and went downstairs in the dining room for lunch. The driver stayed for lunch, too, and afterward we paid him and he started back to Bayonne.

There are two dining rooms in the Montoya. One is upstairs on the second floor and looks out on the square. The other is down one floor below the level of the square and has a door that opens on the back street that the bulls pass along when they run through the streets early in the morning on their way to the ring. It is always cool in the downstairs dining room and we had a very good lunch. The first meal in Spain was always a shock with the hors d'oeuvres, an egg course, two meat courses, vegetables, salad, and dessert and fruit. You have to drink plenty of wine to get it all down. Robert Cohn tried to say he did not want any of the second meat course, but we would not interpret for him, and so the waitress brought him something else as a replacement, a plate of cold meats, I think. Cohn had been rather nervous ever since we had met at Bayonne. He did not know whether we knew Brett had been with him at San Sebastian, and it made him rather awkward.

"Well," I said, "Brett and Mike ought to get in tonight."

"I'm not sure they'll come," Cohn said.

"Why not?" Bill said. "Of course they'll come."

"They're always late," I said.

"I rather think they're not coming," Robert Cohn said.

He said it with an air of superior knowledge that irritated both of us.

"I'll bet you fifty pesetas they're here tonight," Bill said. He always bets when he is angered, and so he usually bets foolishly.

"I'll take it," Cohn said. "Good. You remember it, Jake. Fifty

pesetas."

"I'll remember it myself," Bill said. I saw he was angry and wanted to smooth him down.

"It's a sure thing they'll come," I said. "But maybe not tonight."

"Want to call it off?" Cohn asked.

"No. Why should I? Make it a hundred if you like."

"All right. I'll take that."

"That's enough," I said. "Or you'll have to make a book and give me some of it."

"I'm satisfied," Cohn said. He smiled. "You'll probably win it back at bridge, anyway."

"You haven't got it yet," Bill said.

We went out to walk around under the arcade to the Café Iruña for coffee. Cohn said he was going over and get a shave.

"Say," Bill said to me, "have I got any chance on that bet?"

"You've got a rotten chance. They've never been on time anywhere. If their money doesn't come it's a cinch they won't get in tonight."

"I was sorry as soon as I opened my mouth. But I had to call him. He's all right, I guess, but where does he get this inside stuff? Mike and Brett fixed it up with us about coming down here."

I saw Cohn coming over across the square.

"Here he comes."

"Well, let him not get superior and Jewish."

"The barber shop's closed," Cohn said. "It's not open till four."

We had coffee at the Iruña, sitting in comfortable wicker chairs looking out from the cool of the arcade at the big square. After a while Bill went to write some letters and Cohn went over to the barber-shop. It was still closed, so he decided to go up to the hotel and get a bath, and I sat out in front of the café and then went for a walk in the town. It was very hot, but I kept on the shady side of the streets and went through the market and had a good time seeing the town again. I went to the Ayuntamiento and found the old

gentleman who subscribes for the bullfight tickets for me every year, and he had gotten the money I sent him from Paris and renewed my subscriptions, so that was all set. He was the archivist, and all the archives of the town were in his office. That has nothing to do with the story. Anyway, his office had a green baize door and a big wooden door, and when I went out I left him sitting among the archives that covered all the walls, and I shut both the doors, and as I went out of the building into the street the porter stopped me to brush off my coat.

"You must have been in a motor car," he said.

The back of the collar and the upper part of the shoulders were gray with dust.

"From Bayonne."

"Well, well," he said. "I knew you were in a motor car from the way the dust was." So I gave him two copper coins.

At the end of the street I saw the cathedral and walked up toward it. The first time I ever saw it I thought the Facade was ugly but I liked it now. I went inside. It was dim and dark and the pillars went high up, and there were people praying, and it smelt of incense, and there were some wonderful big windows. I knelt and started to pray and prayed for everybody I thought of, Brett and Mike and Bill and Robert Cohn and myself, and all the bullfighters, separately for the ones I liked, and lumping all the rest, then I prayed for myself again, and while I was praying for myself I found I was getting sleepy, so I prayed that the bullfights would be good, and that it would be a fine fiesta, and that we would get some fishing, I wondered if there was anything else I might pray for, and I thought I would like to have some money, so I prayed that I would make a lot of money, and then I started to think how I would make it, and thinking of making money reminded me of the count, and I started wondering about where he was, and regretting I hadn't seen him since that night in Montmartre, and about something funny Brett told me about him, and as all the time I was kneeling with my

forehead on the wood in front of me, and was thinking of myself as praying, I was a little ashamed, and regretted that I was such a rotten Catholic, but realized there was nothing I could do about it, at least for a while, and maybe never, but that anyway it was a grand religion, and I only wished I felt religious and maybe I would the next time; and then I was out in the hot sun on the steps of the cathedral, and the Forefingers and the thumb of my right hand were still damp, and I felt them dry in the sun. The sunlight was hot and hard, and I crossed over beside some buildings, and walked back along side streets to the hotel.

At dinner that night we found that Robert Cohn had taken a bath, had had a shave and a haircut and a shampoo, and something put on his hair afterward to make it stay down. He was nervous, and I did not try to help him any. The train was due in at nine o'clock from San Sebastian, and, if Brett and Mike were coming, they would be on it. At twenty minutes to nine we were not half through dinner. Robert Cohn got up from the table and said he would go to the station. I said I would go with him, just to devil him. Bill said he would be damned if he would leave his dinner. I said we would be right back.

We walked to the station. I was enjoying Cohn's nervousness. I hoped Brett would be on the train. At the station the train was late, and we sat on a baggage-truck and waited outside in the dark. I have never seen a man in civil life as nervous as Robert Cohn—nor as eager. I was enjoying it. It was lousy to enjoy it, but I felt lousy. Cohn had a wonderful quality of bringing out the worst in anybody.

After a while we heard the train-whistle way off below on the other side of the plateau, and then we saw the headlight coming up the hill. We went inside the station and stood with a crowd of people just back of the gates, and the train came in and stopped, and everybody started coming out through the gates.

They were not in the crowd. We waited till everybody had gone through and out of the station and gotten into buses, or taken cabs,

or were walking with their friends or relatives through the dark into the town.

"I knew they wouldn't come," Robert said. We were going back to the hotel.

"I thought they might," I said.

Bill was eating fruit when we came in and finishing a bottle of wine.

"Didn't come, eh?"

"No."

"Do you mind if I give you that hundred pesetas in the morning, Cohn?" Bill asked. "I haven't changed any money here yet."

"Oh, forget about it," Robert Cohn said. "Let's bet on something else. Can you bet on bullfights?"

"You could," Bill said, "but you don't need to."

"It would be like betting on the war," I said. "You don't need any economic interest."

"I'm very curious to see them," Robert said.

Montoya came up to our table. He had a telegram in his hand.

"It's for you." He handed it to me.

It read: "Stopped night San Sebastian."

"It's from them," I said. I put it in my pocket. Ordinarily I should have handed it over.

"They've stopped over in San Sebastian," I said. "Send their regards to you."

Why I felt that impulse to devil him I do not know. Of course I do know. I was blind, unforgivingly jealous of what had happened to him. The fact that I took it as a matter of course did not alter that any. I certainly did hate him. I do not think I ever really hated him until he had that little spell of superiority at lunch—that and when he went through all that barbering. So I put the telegram in my pocket. The telegram came to me, anyway.

"Well," I said. "We ought to pull out on the noon bus for Burguete. They can follow us if they get in tomorrow night."

There were only two trains up from San Sebastian, an early morning train and the one we had just met.

"That sounds like a good idea," Cohn said. "The sooner we get on the stream the better."

"It's all one to me when we start," Bill said. "The sooner the better."

We sat in the Iruña for a while and had coffee and then took a little walk out to the bullring and across the field and under the trees at the edge of the cliff and looked down at the river in the dark, and I turned in early. Bill and Cohn stayed out in the café quite late, I believe, because I was asleep when they came in.

In the morning I bought three tickets for the bus to Burguete. It was scheduled to leave at two o'clock. There was nothing earlier. I was sitting over at the Iruña reading the papers when I saw Robert Cohn coming across the square. He came up to the table and sat down in one of the wicker chairs.

"This is a comfortable café," he said. "Did you have a good night, Jake?"

"I slept like a log."

"I didn't sleep very well. Bill and I were out late, too."

"Where were you?"

"Here. And after it shut we went over to that other café. The old man there speaks German and English."

"The Café Suizo."

"That's it. He seems like a nice old fellow. I think it's a better café than this one."

"It's not so good in the daytime," I said. "Too hot. By the way, I got the bus tickets."

"I'm not going up today. You and Bill go on ahead."

"I've got your ticket."

"Give it to me. I'll get the money back."

"It's five pesetas."

Robert Cohn took out a silver five-peseta piece and gave it to

me.

"I ought to stay," he said. "You see I'm afraid there's some sort of misunderstanding."

"Why," I said. "They may not come here for three or four days now if they start on parties at San Sebastian."

"That's just it," said Robert. "I'm afraid they expected to meet me at San Sebastian, and that's why they stopped over."

"What makes you think that?"

"Well, I wrote suggesting it to Brett."

"Why in hell didn't you stay there and meet them, then?" I started to say, but I stopped. I thought that idea would come to him by itself, but I do not believe it ever did.

He was being confidential now and it was giving him pleasure to be able to talk with the understanding that I knew there was something between him and Brett.

"Well, Bill and I will go up right after lunch," I said.

"I wish I could go. We've been looking forward to this fishing all winter." He was being sentimental about it. "But I ought to stay. I really ought. As soon as they come I'll bring them right up."

"Let's find Bill."

"I want to go over to the barbershop."

"See you at lunch."

I found Bill up in his room. He was shaving.

"Oh, yes, he told me all about it last night," Bill said. "He's a great little confider. He said he had a date with Brett at San Sebastian."

"The lying bastard!"

"Oh, no," said Bill. "Don't get sore. Don't get sore at this stage of the trip. How did you ever happen to know this fellow anyway?"

"Don't rub it in."

Bill looked around, half-shaved, and then went on talking into the mirror while he lathered his face.

"Didn't you send him with a letter to me in New York last

winter? Thank God, I'm a travelling man. Haven't you got some more Jewish friends you could bring along?" He rubbed his chin with his thumb, looked at it, and then started scraping again.

"You've got some fine ones yourself."

"Oh, yes. I've got some darbs. But not alongside of this Robert Cohn. The funny thing is he's nice, too. I like him. But he's just so awful."

"He can be damn nice."

"I know it. That's the terrible part." I laughed.

"Yes. Go on and laugh," said Bill. "You weren't out with him last night until two o'clock."

"Was he very bad?"

"Awful. What's all this about him and Brett, anyway? Did she ever have anything to do with him?"

He raised his chin up and pulled it from side to side. "Sure. She went down to San Sebastian with him." "What a damn-fool thing to do. Why did she do that?"

"She wanted to get out of town and she can't go anywhere alone. She said she thought it would be good for him."

'What bloody-fool things people do. Why didn't she go off with some of her own people? Or you?"—he slurred that over—"or me? Why not me?" He looked at his face carefully in the glass, put a big dab of lather on each cheek-bone. "It's an honest face. It's a face any woman would be safe with."

"She'd never seen it."

"She should have. All women should see it. It's a face that ought to be thrown on every screen in the country. Every woman ought to be given a copy of this face as she leaves the altar. Mothers should tell their daughters about this face. My son"—he pointed the razor at me—"go west with this face and grow up with the country."

He ducked down to the bowl, rinsed his face with cold water, put on some alcohol, and then looked at himself carefully in the glass, pulling down his long upper lip.

“My God!” he said, “isn’t it an awful face?” He looked in the glass.

“And as for this Robert Cohn,” Bill said, “he makes me sick, and he can go to hell, and I’m damn glad he’s staying here so we won’t have him fishing with us.”

“You’re damn right.”

“We’re going trout fishing. We’re going trout fishing in the Irati River, and we’re going to get tight now at lunch on the wine of the country, and then take a swell bus ride.”

“Come on. Let’s go over to the Iruña and start,” I said.

Chapter XI

It was baking hot in the square when we came out after lunch with our bags and the rod-case to go to Burguete. People were on top of the bus, and others were climbing up a ladder. Bill went up and Robert sat beside Bill to save a place for me, and I went back in the hotel to get a couple of bottles of wine to take with us. When I came out the bus was crowded. Men and women were sitting on all the baggage and boxes on top, and the women all had their fans going in the sun. It certainly was hot. Robert climbed down and I fitted into the place he had saved on the one wooden seat that ran across the top.

Robert Cohn stood in the shade of the arcade waiting for us to start. A Basque with a big leather wine bag in his lap lay across the top of the bus in front of our seat, leaning back against our legs. He offered the wineskin to Bill and to me, and when I tipped it up to drink he imitated the sound of a klaxon motor horn so well and so suddenly that I spilled some of the wine, and everybody laughed. He apologized and made me take another drink. He made the klaxon again a little later, and it fooled me the second time. He was very good at it. The Basques liked it. The man next to Bill was talking to him in Spanish and Bill was not getting it, so he offered the man one of the bottles of wine. The man waved it away. He said it was too hot and he had drunk too much at lunch. When Bill offered the bottle the second time he took a long drink, and then the bottle went all over that part of the bus. Everyone took a drink very politely, and then they made us cork it up and put it away.

They all wanted us to drink from their leather wine bottles. They were peasants going up into the hills.

Finally, after a couple more false klaxons, the bus started, and Robert Cohn waved good-bye to us, and all the Basques waved good-bye to him. As soon as we started out on the road outside of town it was cool. It felt nice riding high up and close under the trees. The bus went quite fast and made a good breeze, and as we went out along the road with the dust powdering the trees and down the hill, we had a fine view, back through the trees, of the town rising up from the bluff above the river. The Basque lying against my knees pointed out the view with the neck of the wine bottle, and winked at us. He nodded his head.

"Pretty nice, eh?"

"These Basques are swell people," Bill said.

The Basque lying against my legs was tanned the color of saddle-leather. He wore a black smock like all the rest. There were wrinkles in his tanned neck. He turned around and offered his wine bag to Bill. Bill handed him one of our bottles. The Basque wagged a forefinger at him and handed the bottle back, slapping in the cork with the palm of his hand. He shoved the wine bag up.

"Arriba! Arriba!" he said. "Lift it up."

Bill raised the wineskin and let the stream of wine spurt out and into his mouth, his head tipped back. When he stopped drinking and tipped the leather bottle down a few drops ran down his chin.

"No! No!" several Basques said. "Not like that." One snatched the bottle away from the owner, who was himself about to give a demonstration. He was a young fellow and he held the wine bottle at full arm's length and raised it high up, squeezing the leather bag with his hand so the stream of wine hissed into his mouth. He held the bag out there, the wine making a flat, hard trajectory into his mouth, and he kept on swallowing smoothly and regularly.

"Hey!" the owner of the bottle shouted. "Whose wine is that?"

The drinker waggled his little finger at him and smiled at us

with his eyes. Then he bit the stream off sharp, made a quick lift with the wine bag and lowered it down to the owner. He winked at us. The owner shook the wineskin sadly.

We passed through a town and stopped in front of the posada, and the driver took on several packages. Then we started on again, and outside the town the road commenced to mount. We were going through farming country with rocky hills that sloped down into the fields. The grain fields went up the hillsides. Now as we went higher there was a wind blowing the grain. The road was white and dusty, and the dust rose under the wheels and hung in the air behind us. The road climbed up into the hills and left the rich grain fields below. Now there were only patches of grain on the bare hillsides and on each side of the water courses. We turned sharply out to the side of the road to give room to pass to a long string of six mules, following one after the other, hauling a high-hooded wagon loaded with freight. The wagon and the mules were covered with dust. Close behind was another string of mules and another wagon. This was loaded with lumber, and the arriero driving the mules leaned back and put on the thick wooden brakes as we passed. Up here the country was quite barren and the hills were rocky and hard-baked clay furrowed by the rain.

We came around a curve into a town, and on both sides opened out a sudden green valley. A stream went through the centre of the town and fields of grapes touched the houses.

The bus stopped in front of a posada and many of the passengers got down, and a lot of the baggage was unstrapped from the roof from under the big tarpaulins and lifted down. Bill and I got down and went into the posada. There was a low, dark room with saddles and harness, and hayforks made of white wood, and clusters of canvas rope-soled shoes and hams and slabs of bacon and white garlics and long sausages hanging from the roof. It was cool and dusky, and we stood in front of a long wooden counter with two women behind it serving drinks. Behind them were shelves stacked

with supplies and goods.

We each had an aguardiente and paid forty centimes for the two drinks. I gave the woman fifty centimes to make a tip, and she gave me back the copper piece, thinking I had misunderstood the price.

Two of our Basques came in and insisted on buying a drink. So they bought a drink and then we bought a drink, and then they slapped us on the back and bought another drink. Then we bought, and then we all went out into the sunlight and the heat, and climbed back on top of the bus. There was plenty of room now for everyone to sit on the seat, and the Basque who had been lying on the tin roof now sat between us. The woman who had been serving drinks came out wiping her hands on her apron and talked to somebody inside the bus. Then the driver came out swinging two flat leather mail pouches and climbed up, and everybody waving we started off.

The road left the green valley at once, and we were up in the hills again. Bill and the wine bottle Basque were having a conversation. A man leaned over from the other side of the seat and asked in English: “You’re Americans?”

“Sure.”

“I been there,” he said. “Forty years ago.”

He was an old man, as brown as the others, with the stubble of a white beard.

“How was it?”

“What you say?”

“How was America?”

“Oh, I was in California. It was fine.”

“Why did you leave?”

“What you say?”

“Why did you come back here?”

“Oh! I come back to get married. I was going to go back but my wife she don’t like to travel. Where you from?”

“Kansas City.”

“I been there,” he said. “I been in Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, Denver, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City.”

He named them carefully. “How long were you over?”

“Fifteen years. Then I come back and got married.”

“Have a drink?”

“All right,” he said. “You can’t get this in America, eh?”

“There’s plenty if you can pay for it.”

“What you come over here for?”

“We’re going to the fiesta at Pamplona.”

“You like the bullfights?”

“Sure. Don’t you?”

“Yes,” he said. “I guess I like them.”

Then after a little:

“Where you go now?”

“Up to Burguete to fish.”

“Well,” he said, “I hope you catch something.”

He shook hands and turned around to the back seat again. The other Basques had been impressed. He sat back comfortably and smiled at me when I turned around to look at the country. But the effort of talking American seemed to have tired him. He did not say anything after that.

The bus climbed steadily up the road. The country was barren and rocks stuck up through the clay. There was no grass beside the road. Looking back we could see the country spread out below. Far back the fields were squares of green and brown on the hillsides. Making the horizon were the brown mountains. They were strangely shaped. As we climbed higher the horizon kept changing. As the bus ground slowly up the road we could see other mountains coming up in the south. Then the road came over the crest, flattened out, and went into a forest. It was a forest of cork oaks, and the sun came through the trees in patches, and there were cattle grazing back in the trees. We went through the forest and the road came out and turned along a rise of land, and out ahead of us

was a rolling green plain, with dark mountains beyond it. These were not like the brown, heat-baked mountains we had left behind. These were wooded and there were clouds coming down from them. The green plain stretched off. It was cut by fences and the white of the road showed through the trunks of a double line of trees that crossed the plain toward the north. As we came to the edge of the rise we saw the red roofs and white houses of Burguete ahead strung out on the plain, and away off on the shoulder of the first dark mountain was the gray metal-sheathed roof of the monastery of Roncesvalles.

"There's Roncevaux," I said.

"Where?"

"Way off there where the mountain starts."

"It's cold up here," Bill said.

"It's high," I said. "It must be twelve hundred metres."

"It's awful cold," Bill said.

The bus levelled down onto the straight line of road that ran to Burguete. We passed a crossroads and crossed a bridge over a stream. The houses of Burguete were along both sides of the road. There were no side streets. We passed the church and the schoolyard, and the bus stopped. We got down and the driver handed down our bags and the rod-case. A carabineer in his cocked hat and yellow leather cross-straps came up.

"What's in there?" he pointed to the rod-case.

I opened it and showed him. He asked to see our fishing permits and I got them out. He looked at the date and then waved us on

"Is that all right?" I asked. "Yes. Of course."

We went up the street, past the whitewashed stone houses, families sitting in their doorways watching us, to the inn.

The fat woman who ran the inn came out from the kitchen and shook hands with us. She took off her spectacles, wiped them, and put them on again. It was cold in the inn and the wind was starting to blow outside. The woman sent a girl upstairs with us to show the

room. There were two beds, a washstand, a clothes chest, and a big, framed steel engraving of Nuestra Senora de Roncesvalles. The wind was blowing against the shutters. The room was on the north side of the inn. We washed, put on sweaters, and came downstairs into the dining room. It had a stone floor, low ceiling, and was oak panelled. The shutters were all up and it was so cold you could see your breath.

"My God!" said Bill. "It can't be this cold tomorrow. I'm not going to wade a stream in this weather."

There was an upright piano in the far corner of the room beyond the wooden tables and Bill went over and started to play.

"I got to keep warm," he said.

I went out to find the woman and ask her how much the room and board was. She put her hands under her apron and looked away from me.

"Twelve pesetas."

"Why, we only paid that in Pamplona."

She did not say anything, just took off her glasses and wiped them on her apron.

"That's too much," I said. 'We didn't pay more than that at a big hotel."

"We've put in a bathroom."

"Haven't you got anything cheaper?"

"Not in the summer. Now is the big season."

We were the only people in the inn. Well, I thought, it's only a few days.

"Is the wine included?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well," I said. "It's all right."

I went back to Bill. He blew his breath at me to show how cold it was, and went on playing. I sat at one of the tables and looked at the pictures on the wall. There was one panel of rabbits, dead, one of pheasants, also dead, and one panel of dead ducks. The panels

were all dark and smoky-looking. There was a cupboard full of liqueur bottles. I looked at them all. Bill was still playing. “How about a hot rum punch?” he said. “This isn’t going to keep me warm permanently.”

I went out and told the woman what a rum punch was and how to make it. In a few minutes a girl brought a stone pitcher, steaming, into the room. Bill came over from the piano and we drank the hot punch and listened to the wind.

“There isn’t too much rum in that.”

I went over to the cupboard and brought the rum bottle and poured a half-tumblerful into the pitcher.

“Direct action,” said Bill. “It beats legislation.”

The girl came in and laid the table for supper.

“It blows like hell up here,” Bill said.

The girl brought in a big bowl of hot vegetable soup and the wine. We had fried trout afterward and some sort of a stew and a big bowl full of wild strawberries. We did not lose money on the wine, and the girl was shy but nice about bringing it. The old woman looked in once and counted the empty bottles.

After supper we went upstairs and smoked and read in bed to keep warm. Once in the night I woke and heard the wind blowing. It felt good to be warm and in bed.

Chapter XII

When I woke in the morning I went to the window and looked out. It had cleared and there were no clouds on the mountains. Outside under the window were some carts and an old diligence, the wood of the roof cracked and split by the weather. It must have been left from the days before the motor buses. A goat hopped up on one of the carts and then to the roof of the diligence. He jerked his head at the other goats below and when I waved at him he bounded down.

Bill was still sleeping, so I dressed, put on my shoes outside in the hall, and went downstairs. No one was stirring downstairs, so I unbolted the door and went out. It was cool outside in the early morning and the sun had not yet dried the dew that had come when the wind died down. I hunted around in the shed behind the inn and found a sort of mattock, and went down toward the stream to try and dig some worms for bait. The stream was clear and shallow but it did not look trouty. On the grassy bank where it was damp I drove the mattock into the earth and loosened a chunk of sod. There were worms underneath. They slid out of sight as I lifted the sod and I dug carefully and got a good many. Digging at the edge of the damp ground I filled two empty tobacco-tins with worms and sifted dirt onto them. The goats watched me dig.

When I went back into the inn the woman was down in the kitchen, and I asked her to get coffee for us, and that we wanted a lunch. Bill was awake and sitting on the edge of the bed.

“I saw you out of the window,” he said. “Didn’t want to interrupt you. What were you doing? Burying your money?”

“You lazy bum!”

“Been working for the common good? Splendid. I want you to do that every morning.”

“Come on,” I said. “Get up.”

“What? Get up? I never get up.”

He climbed into bed and pulled the sheet up to his chin.

“Try and argue me into getting up.”

I went on looking for the tackle and putting it all together in the tackle bag.

“Aren’t you interested?” Bill asked.

“I’m going down and eat.”

“Eat? Why didn’t you say eat? I thought you just wanted me to get up for fun. Eat? Fine. Now you’re reasonable. You go out and dig some more worms and I’ll be right down.”

“Oh, go to hell!”

“Work for the good of all.” Bill stepped into his underclothes.

“Show irony and pity.”

I started out of the room with the tackle-bag, the nets, and the rod-case.

“Hey! Come back!”

I put my head in the door.

“Aren’t you going to show a little irony and pity?”

I thumbed my nose.

“That’s not irony.”

As I went downstairs I heard Bill singing, “Irony and Pity. When you’re feeling... Oh, Give them Irony and Give them Pity. Oh, give them Irony. When they’re feeling... Just a little irony. Just a little pity...” He kept on singing until he came downstairs. The tune was: “The Bells are Ringing for Me and my Gal.” I was reading a week-old Spanish paper.

“What’s all this irony and pity?”

“What? Don’t you know about Irony and Pity?”

“No. Who got it up?”

“Everybody. They’re mad about it in New York. It’s just like the Fratellinis used to be.”

The girl came in with the coffee and buttered toast. Or, rather, it was bread toasted and buttered.

“Ask her if she’s got any jam,” Bill said. “Be ironical with her.”

“Have you got any jam?”

“That’s not ironical. I wish I could talk Spanish.”

The coffee was good and we drank it out of big bowls. The girl brought in a glass dish of raspberry jam.

“Thank you.”

“Hey! That’s not the way,” Bill said. “Say something ironical. Make some crack about Primo de Rivera.”

“I could ask her what kind of a jam they think they’ve gotten into in the Riff.”

“Poor,” said Bill. “Very poor. You can’t do it. That’s all. You don’t understand irony. You have no pity. Say something pitiful.”

“Robert Cohn.”

“Not so bad. That’s better. Now why is Cohn pitiful? Be ironic. “

He took a big gulp of coffee.

“Aw, hell!” I said. “It’s too early in the morning.”

‘There you go. And you claim you want to be a writer, too.

You’re only a newspaper man. An expatriated newspaper man. You ought to be ironical the minute you get out of bed. You ought to wake up with your mouth full of pity.”

“Go on,” I said. “Who did you get this stuff from?”

“Everybody. Don’t you read? Don’t you ever see anybody? You know what you are? You’re an expatriate. Why don’t you live in New York? Then you’d know these things. What do you want me to do? Come over here and tell you every year?”

“Take some more coffee,” I said.

“Good. Coffee is good for you. It’s the caffeine in it. Caffeine, we are here. Caffeine puts a man on her horse and a woman in his grave. You know what’s the trouble with you? You’re an expatriate.

One of the worst type. Haven't you heard that? Nobody that ever left their own country ever wrote anything worth printing. Not even in the newspapers."

He drank the coffee.

"You're an expatriate. You've lost touch with the soil. You get precious. Fake European standards have ruined you. You drink yourself to death. You become obsessed by sex. You spend all your time talking, not working. You are an expatriate, see? You hang around café s."

"It sounds like a swell life," I said. "When do I work?"

"You don't work. One group claims women support you. Another group claims you're impotent."

"No," I said. "I just had an accident."

"Never mention that," Bill said. "That's the sort of thing that can't be spoken of. That's what you ought to work up into a mystery. Like Henry's bicycle."

He had been going splendidly, but he stopped. I was afraid he thought he had hurt me with that crack about being impotent. I wanted to start him again.

"It wasn't a bicycle," I said. "He was riding horseback."

"I heard it was a tricycle."

"Well," I said. "A plane is sort of like a tricycle. The joystick works the same way."

"But you don't pedal it."

"No," I said, "I guess you don't pedal it."

"Let's layoff that," Bill said.

"All right. I was just standing up for the tricycle."

"I think he's a good writer, too," Bill said. "And you're a hell of a good guy. Anybody ever tell you you were a good guy?"

"I'm not a good guy."

"Listen. You're a hell of a good guy, and I'm fonder of you than anybody on earth. I couldn't tell you that in New York. It'd mean I was a faggot. That was what the Civil War was about. Abraham

Lincoln was a faggot. He was in love with General Grant. So was Jefferson Davis. Lincoln just freed the slaves on a bet. The Dred Scott case was framed by the Anti-Saloon League. Sex explains it all. The Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady are Lesbians under their skin."

He stopped.

"Want to hear some more?"

"Shoot," I said.

"I don't know anymore. Tell you some more at lunch."

"Old Bill," I said.

"You bum!"

We packed the lunch and two bottles of wine in the rucksack, and Bill put it on. I carried the rod-case and the landing-nets slung over my back. We started up the road and then went across a meadow and found a path that crossed the fields and went toward the woods on the slope of the first hill. We walked across the fields on the sandy path. The fields were rolling and grassy and the grass was short from the sheep grazing. The cattle were up in the hills. We heard their bells in the woods.

The path crossed a stream on a foot log. The log was surfaced off, and there was a sapling bent across for a rail. In the flat pool beside the stream tadpoles spotted the sand. We went up a steep bank and across the rolling fields. Looking back we saw Burguete, white houses and red roofs, and the white road with a truck going along it and the dust rising.

Beyond the fields we crossed another faster-flowing stream. A sandy road led down to the ford and beyond into the woods. The path crossed the stream on another foot log below the ford, and joined the road, and we went into the woods.

It was a beech wood and the trees were very old. Their roots bulked above the ground and the branches were twisted. We walked on the road between the thick trunks of the old beeches and the sunlight came through the leaves in light patches on the grass.

The trees were big, and the foliage was thick but it was not gloomy. There was no undergrowth, only the smooth grass, very green and fresh, and the big gray trees well-spaced as though it were a park.

"This is country," Bill said.

The road went up a hill and we got into thick woods, and the road kept on climbing. Sometimes it dipped down but rose again steeply. All the time we heard the cattle in the woods. Finally, the road came out on the top of the hills. We were on the top of the height of land that was the highest part of the range of wooded hills we had seen from Burguete. There were wild strawberries growing on the sunny side of the ridge in a little clearing in the trees.

Ahead the road came out of the forest and went along the shoulder of the ridge of hills. The hills ahead were not wooded, and there were great fields of yellow gorse. Way off we saw the steep bluffs, dark with trees and jutting with gray stone, that marked the course of the Irati River.

"We have to follow this road along the ridge, cross these hills, go through the woods on the far hills, and come down to the Irati valley," I pointed out to Bill.

"That's a hell of a hike."

"It's too far to go and fish and come back the same day, comfortably."

"Comfortably. That's a nice word. We'll have to go like hell to get there and back and have any fishing at all."

It was a long walk and the country was very fine, but we were tired when we came down the steep road that led out of the wooded hills into the valley of the Rio de la Fabrica.

The road came out from the shadow of the woods into the hot sun. Ahead was a river valley. Beyond the river was a steep hill. There was a field of buckwheat on the hill. We saw a white house under some trees on the hillside. It was very hot and we stopped under some trees beside a dam that crossed the river.

Bill put the pack against one of the trees and we jointed up the

rods, put on the reels, tied on leaders, and got ready to fish.

"You're sure this thing has trout in it?" Bill asked. "It's full of them."

"I'm going to fish a fly. You got any McGintys?"

"There's some in there."

"You going to fish bait?"

"Yeah. I'm going to fish the dam here."

"Well, I'll take the fly-book, then." He tied on a fly. "Where'd I better go? Up or down?"

"Down is the best. They're plenty up above, too."

Bill went down the bank.

"Take a worm can."

"No, I don't want one. If they won't take a fly I'll just flick it around."

Bill was down below watching the stream.

"Say," he called up against the noise of the dam. "How about putting the wine in that spring up the road?"

"All right," I shouted. Bill waved his hand and started down the stream. I found the two wine bottles in the pack, and carried them up the road to where the water of a spring flowed out of an iron pipe. There was a board over the spring and I lifted it and, knocking the corks firmly into the bottles, lowered them down into the water. It was so cold my hand and wrist felt numbed. I put back the slab of wood, and hoped nobody would find the wine.

I got my rod that was leaning against the tree, took the bait can and landing-net, and walked out onto the dam. It was built to provide a head of water for driving logs. The gate was up, and I sat on one of the squared timbers and watched the smooth apron of water before the river tumbled into the falls. In the white water at the foot of the dam it was deep. As I baited up, a trout shot up out of the white water into the falls and was carried down. Before I could finish baiting, another trout jumped at the falls, making the same lovely arc and disappearing into the water that was

thundering down. I put on a good-sized sinker and dropped into the white water close to the edge of the timbers of the dam.

I did not feel the first trout strike. When I started to pull up I felt that I had one and brought him, fighting and bending the rod almost double, out of the boiling water at the foot of the falls, and swung him up and onto the dam. He was a good trout, and I banged his head against the timber so that he quivered out straight, and then slipped him into my bag.

While I had him on, several trout had jumped at the falls. As soon as I baited up and dropped in again I hooked another and brought him in the same way. In a little while I had six. They were all about the same size. I laid them out, side by side, all their heads pointing the same way, and looked at them. They were beautifully colored and firm and hard from the cold water. It was a hot day, so I slit them all and shucked out the insides, gills and all, and tossed them over across the river. I took the trout ashore, washed them in the cold, smoothly heavy water above the dam, and then picked some ferns and packed them all in the bag, three trout on a layer of ferns, then another layer of ferns, then three more trout, and then covered them with ferns. They looked nice in the ferns, and now the bag was bulky, and I put it in the shade of the tree.

It was very hot on the dam, so I put my worm can in the shade with the bag, and got a book out of the pack and settled down under the tree to read until Bill should come up for lunch.

It was a little past noon and there was not much shade, but I sat against the trunk of two of the trees that grew together, and read. The book was something by A. E. W. Mason, and I was reading a wonderful story about a man who had been frozen in the Alps and then fallen into a glacier and disappeared, and his bride was going to wait twenty-four years exactly for his body to come out on the moraine, while her true love waited too, and they were still waiting when Bill came up.

“Get any?” he asked. He had his rod and his bag and his net all

in one hand, and he was sweating. I hadn't heard him come up, because of the noise from the dam.

"Six. What did you get?"

Bill sat down, opened up his bag, laid a big trout on the grass.

He took out three more, each one a little bigger than the last, and laid them side by side in the shade from the tree. His face was sweaty and happy.

"How are yours?"

"Smaller."

"Let's see them."

"They're packed."

"How big are they really?"

"They're all about the size of your smallest."

"You're not holding out on me?"

"I wish I were."

"Get them all on worms?"

"Yes."

"You lazy bum!"

Bill put the trout in the bag and started for the river, swinging the open bag. He was wet from the waist down and I knew he must have been wading the stream.

I walked up the road and got out the two bottles of wine. They were cold. Moisture beaded on the bottles as I walked back to the trees. I spread the lunch on a newspaper, and uncorked one of the bottles and leaned the other against a tree. Bill came up drying his hands, his bag plump with ferns.

"Let's see that bottle," he said. He pulled the cork, and tipped up the bottle and drank. "Whew! That makes my eyes ache."

"Let's try it."

The wine was icy cold and tasted faintly rusty.

"That's not such filthy wine," Bill said.

"The cold helps it," I said.

We unwrapped the little parcels of lunch. "Chicken."

“There’s hard-boiled eggs.”

“Find any salt?”

“First the egg,” said Bill. “Then the chicken. Even Bryan could see that.”

“He’s dead. I read it in the paper yesterday.”

“No. Not really?”

“Yes. Bryan’s dead.”

Bill laid down the egg he was peeling.

“Gentlemen,” he said, and unwrapped a drumstick from a piece of newspaper. “I reverse the order. For Bryan’s sake. As a tribute to the Great Commoner. First the chicken; then the egg.”

“Wonder what day God created the chicken?”

“Oh,” said Bill, sucking the drumstick, “how should we know? We should not question. Our stay on earth is not for long. Let us rejoice and believe and give thanks.”

“Eat an egg.”

Bill gestured with the drumstick in one hand and the bottle of wine in the other.

“Let us rejoice in our blessings. Let us utilize the fowls of the air. Let us utilize the product of the vine. Will you utilize a little, brother?”

“After you, brother.” Bill took a long drink.

“Utilize a little, brother,” he handed me the bottle. “Let us not doubt, brother. Let us not pry into the holy mysteries of the hencoop with simian fingers. Let us accept on faith and simply say —I want you to join with me in saying—What shall we say, brother?” He pointed the drumstick at me and went on. “Let me tell you. We will say, and I for one am proud to say—and I want you to say with me, on your knees, brother. Let no man be ashamed to kneel here in the great out-of-doors. Remember the woods were God’s first temples. Let us kneel and say: ‘Don’t eat that, Lady—that’s Mencken’.’’

“Here,” I said. “Utilize a little of this.”

We uncorked the other bottle.

"What's the matter?" I said. "Didn't you like Bryan?"

"I loved Bryan," said Bill. "We were like brothers."

"Where did you know him?"

"He and Mencken and I all went to Holy Cross together."

"And Frankie Fritsch."

"It's a lie. Frankie Fritsch went to Fordham."

"Well," I said, "I went to Loyola with Bishop Manning."

"It's a lie," Bill said. "I went to Loyola with Bishop Manning myself."

"You're cock-eyed," I said. "On wine?"

"Why not?"

"It's the humidity," Bill said. "They ought to take this damn humidity away."

"Have another shot."

"Is this all we've got?"

"Only the two bottles."

"Do you know what you are?" Bill looked at the bottle affectionately.

"No," I said.

"You're in the pay of the Anti-Saloon League."

"I went to Notre Dame with Wayne B. Wheeler."

"It's a lie," said Bill. "I went to Austin Business College with Wayne B. Wheeler. He was class president."

"Well," I said, "the saloon must go."

"You're right there, old classmate," Bill said. "The saloon must go, and I will take it with me."

"You're cock-eyed."

"On wine?"

"On wine."

"Well, maybe I am."

"Want to take a nap?

"All right."

We lay with our heads in the shade and looked up into the trees.

"You asleep?"

"No," Bill said. "I was thinking."

I shut my eyes. It felt good lying on the ground.

"Say," Bill said, "what about this Brett business?"

"What about it?"

"Were you ever in love with her?"

"Sure."

"For how long?"

"Off and on for a hell of a long time."

"Oh, hell!" Bill said. "I'm sorry, fella."

"It's all right," I said. "I don't give a damn anymore."

"Really?"

"Really. Only I'd a hell of a lot rather not talk about it."

"You aren't sore I asked you?"

"Why the hell should I be?"

"I'm going to sleep," Bill said. He put a newspaper over his face.

"Listen, Jake," he said, "are you really a Catholic?"

"Technically."

"What does that mean?"

"I don't know."

"All right, I'll go to sleep now," he said. "Don't keep me awake by talking so much."

I went to sleep, too. When I woke up Bill was packing the rucksack. It was late in the afternoon and the shadow from the trees was long and went out over the dam. I was stiff from sleeping on the ground.

"What did you do? Wake up?" Bill asked. "Why didn't you spend the night?" I stretched and rubbed my eyes.

"I had a lovely dream," Bill said. "I don't remember what it was about, but it was a lovely dream."

"I don't think I dreamt."

"You ought to dream," Bill said. "All our biggest business men

have been dreamers. Look at Ford. Look at President Coolidge. Look at Rockefeller. Look at Jo Davidson."

I disjointed my rod and Bill's and packed them in the rod-case. I put the reels in the tackle bag. Bill had packed the rucksack and we put one of the trout bags in. I carried the other.

"Well," said Bill, "have we got everything?"

"The worms."

"Your worms. Put them in there."

He had the pack on his back and I put the worm cans in one of the outside flap pockets.

"You got everything now?"

I looked around on the grass at the foot of the elm trees.

"Yes."

We started up the road into the woods. It was a long walk home to Burguete, and it was dark when we came down across the fields to the road, and along the road between the houses of the town, their windows lighted, to the inn.

We stayed five days at Burguete and had good fishing. The nights were cold and the days were hot, and there was always a breeze even in the heat of the day. It was hot enough so that it felt good to wade in a cold stream, and the sun dried you when you came out and sat on the bank. We found a stream with a pool deep enough to swim in. In the evenings we played three-handed bridge with an Englishman named Harris, who had walked over from Saint Jean Pied de Port and was stopping at the inn for the fishing. He was very pleasant and went with us twice to the Irati River. There was no word from Robert Cohn nor from Brett and Mike.

Chapter XIII

One morning I went down to breakfast and the Englishman, Harris, was already at the table. He was reading the paper through spectacles. He looked up and smiled.

"Good morning," he said. "Letter for you. I stopped at the post and they gave it me with mine."

The letter was at my place at the table, leaning against a coffee-cup. Harris was reading the paper again. I opened the letter. It had been forwarded from Pamplona. It was dated San Sebastian, Sunday:

Dear Jake,

We got here Friday, Brett passed out on the train, so brought her here for 3 days rest with old friends of ours. We go to Montoya Hotel Pamplona Tuesday, arriving at I don't know what hour. Will you send a note by the bus to tell us what to do to rejoin you all on Wednesday. All our love and sorry to be late, but Brett was really done in and will be quite all right by Tues. and is practically so now. I know her so well and try to look after her but it's not so easy. Love to all the chaps,

Michael.

"What day of the week is it?" I asked Harris.

"Wednesday, I think. Yes, quite. Wednesday. Wonderful how one loses track of the days up here in the mountains."

"Yes. We've been here nearly a week."

"I hope you're not thinking of leaving?"

"Yes. We'll go in on the afternoon bus, I'm afraid."

“What a rotten business. I had hoped we’d all have another go at the Irati together.”

“We have to go *into* Pamplona. We’re meeting people there.”

“What rotten luck for me. We’ve had a jolly time here at Burguete.”

“Come on in to Pamplona. We can play some bridge there, and there’s going to be a damned fine fiesta.”

“I’d like to. Awfully nice of you to ask me. I’d best stop on here, though. I’ve not much more time to fish.”

“You want those big ones in the Irati.”

“I say, I do, you know. They’re enormous trout there.”

“I’d like to try them once more.”

“Do. Stop over another day. Be a good chap.”

“We really have to get into town,” I said.

“What a pity.”

After breakfast Bill and I were sitting warming in the sun on a bench out in front of the inn and talking it over. I saw a girl coming up the road from the centre of the town. She stopped in front of us and took a telegram out of the leather wallet that hung against her skirt.

“Por ustedes?”

I looked at it. The address was: “Barnes, Burguete.”

“Yes. It’s for us.”

She brought out a book for me to sign, and I gave her a couple of coppers. The telegram was in Spanish: “Vengo Jueves Cohn.”

I handed it to Bill.

“What does the word Cohn mean?” he asked.

“What a lousy telegram!” I said. “He could send ten words for the same price. ‘I come Thursday’. That gives you a lot of dope, doesn’t it?”

“It gives you all the dope that’s of interest to Cohn.”

“We’re going in, anyway,” I said. “There’s no use trying to move Brett and Mike out here and back before the fiesta. Should we

answer it?"

"We might as well," said Bill. "There's no need for us to be snooty."

We walked up to the post-office and asked for a telegraph blank.

"What will we say?" Bill asked. "'Arriving tonight.' That's enough."

We paid for the message and walked back to the inn. Harris was there and the three of us walked up to Roncesvalles. We went through the monastery.

"It's a remarkable place," Harris said, when we came out. "But you know I'm not much on those sort of places."

"Me either," Bill said.

"It's a remarkable place, though," Harris said. "I wouldn't not have seen it. I'd been intending coming up each day."

"It isn't the same as fishing, though, is it?" Bill asked. He liked Harris.

"I say not."

We were standing in front of the old chapel of the monastery.

"Isn't that a pub across the way?" Harris asked. "Or do my eyes deceive me?"

"It has the look of a pub," Bill said.

"It looks to me like a pub," I said.

"I say," said Harris, "let's utilize it." He had taken up utilizing from Bill.

We had a bottle of wine apiece. Harris would not let us pay. He talked Spanish quite well, and the innkeeper would not take our money.

"I say. You don't know what it's meant to me to have you chaps up here."

"We've had a grand time, Harris." Harris was a little tight.

"I say. Really you don't know how much it means. I've not had much fun since the war."

"We'll fish together again, some time. Don't you forget it,

Harris."

"We must. We *have* had such a jolly good time."

"How about another bottle around?"

"Jolly good idea," said Harris.

"This is mine," said Bill. "Or we don't drink it."

"I wish you'd let me pay for it. It *does* give me pleasure, you know."

"This is going to give me pleasure," Bill said.

The innkeeper brought in the fourth bottle. We had kept the same glasses. Harris lifted his glass.

"I say. You know this does utilize well." Bill slapped him on the back.

"Good old Harris."

"I say. You know my name isn't really Harris. It's Wilson Harris. All one name. With a hyphen, you know."

"Good old Wilson-Harris," Bill said. "We call you Harris because we're so fond of you."

"I say, Barnes. You don't know what this all means to me."

"Come on and utilize another glass," I said.

"Barnes. Really, Barnes, you can't know. That's all."

"Drink up, Harris."

We walked back down the road from Roncesvalles with Harris between us. We had lunch at the inn and Harris went with us to the bus. He gave us his card, with his address in London and his club and his business address, and as we got on the bus he handed us each an envelope. I opened mine and there were a dozen flies in it. Harris had tied them himself. He tied all his own flies.

"I say, Harris—" I began.

"No, no!" he said. He was climbing down from the bus.

"They're not first-rate flies at all. I only thought if you fished them some time it might remind you of what a good time we had."

The bus started. Harris stood in front of the post office. He waved. As we started along the road he turned and walked back

toward the inn.

"Say, wasn't that Harris nice?" Bill said. "I think he really did have a good time."

"Harris? You bet he did."

"I wish he'd come into Pamplona."

"He wanted to fish."

"Yes. You couldn't tell how English would mix with each other, anyway."

"I suppose not."

We got into Pamplona late in the afternoon and the bus stopped in front of the Hotel Montoya. Out in the plaza they were stringing electric light wires to light the plaza for the fiesta. A few kids came up when the bus stopped, and a customs officer for the town made all the people getting down from the bus open their bundles on the sidewalk. We went into the hotel and on the stairs I met Montoya. He shook hands with us, smiling in his embarrassed way.

"Your friends are here," he said. "Mr. Campbell?"

"Yes. Mr. Cohn and Mr. Campbell and Lady Ashley."

He smiled as though there were something I would hear about. "When did they get in?"

"Yesterday. I've saved you the rooms you had."

"That's fine. Did you give Mr. Campbell the room on the plaza?"

"Yes. All the rooms we looked at."

"Where are our friends now?"

"I think they went to the pelota."

"And how about the bulls?"

Montoya smiled. "Tonight," he said. "Tonight at seven o'clock they bring in the Villar bulls, and tomorrow come the Miuras. Do you all go down?"

"Oh, yes. They've never seen a desencajonada." Montoya put his hand on my shoulder.

"I'll see you there."

He smiled again. He always smiled as though bullfighting were a

very special secret between the two of us; a rather shocking but really very deep secret that we knew about. He always smiled as though there were something lewd about the secret to outsiders, but that it was something that we understood. It would not do to expose it to people who would not understand.

"Your friend, is he aficionado, too?" Montoya smiled at Bill. "Yes. He came all the way from New York to see the San Fermines."

"Yes?" Montoya politely disbelieved. "But he's not aficionado like you."

He put his hand on my shoulder again embarrassedly. "Yes," I said. "He's a real aficionado."

"But he's not aficionado like you are."

Afición means passion. An aficionado is one who is passionate about the bullfights. All the good bullfighters stayed at Montoya's hotel; that is, those with afición stayed there. The commercial bullfighters stayed once, perhaps, and then did not come back. The good ones came each year. In Montoya's room were their photographs. The photographs were dedicated to Juanito Montoya or to his sister. The photographs of bullfighters Montoya had really believed in were framed. Photographs of bullfighters who had been without afición Montoya kept in a drawer of his desk. They often had the most flattering inscriptions. But they did not mean anything. One day Montoya took them all out and dropped them in the wastebasket. He did not want them around.

We often talked about bulls and bullfighters. I had stopped at the Montoya for several years. We never talked for very long at a time. It was simply the pleasure of discovering what we each felt. Men would come in from distant towns and before they left Pamplona stop and talk for a few minutes with Montoya about bulls. These men were aficionados. Those who were aficionados could always get rooms even when the hotel was full. Montoya introduced me to some of them. They were always very polite at first, and it amused them very much that I should be an American.

Somehow it was taken for granted that an American could not have aficion. He might simulate it or confuse it with excitement, but he could not really have it. When they saw that I had aficion, and there was no password, no set questions that could bring it out, rather it was a sort of oral spiritual examination with the questions always a little on the defensive and never apparent, there was this same embarrassed putting the hand on the shoulder, or a "Buen hombre." But nearly always there was the actual touching. It seemed as though they wanted to touch you to make it certain.

Montoya could forgive anything of a bullfighter who had aficion. He could forgive attacks of nerves, panic, bad unexplainable actions, all sorts of lapses. For one who had aficion he could forgive anything. At once he forgave me all my friends. Without his ever saying anything they were simply a little something shameful between us, like the spilling open of the horses in bullfighting.

Bill had gone upstairs as we came in, and I found him washing and changing in his room.

"Well," he said, "talk a *lot* of Spanish?"

"He was telling me about the bulls coming in tonight."

"Let's find the gang and go down."

"All right. They'll probably be at the café."

"Have you got tickets?"

"Yes. I got them for all the unloadings."

"What's it like?" He was pulling his cheek before the glass, looking to see if there were unshaved patches under the line of the jaw.

"It's pretty good," I said. "They let the bulls out of the cages one at a time, and they have steers in the corral to receive them and keep them from fighting, and the bulls tear in at the steers and the steers run around like old maids trying to quiet them down."

"Do they ever gore the steers?"

"Sure. Sometimes they go right after them and kill them."

"Can't the steers do anything?"

“No. They’re trying to make friends.”

“What do they have them in for?”

“To quiet down the bulls and keep them from breaking their horns against the stone walls, or goring each other.”

“Must be swell being a steer.”

We went down the stairs and out of the door and walked across the square toward the Café Iruña. There were two lonely looking ticket houses standing in the square. Their windows, marked sol, sol y somera, and somera, were shut. They would not open until the day before the fiesta.

Across the square the white wicker tables and chairs of the Iruña extended out beyond the Arcade to the edge of the street. I looked for Brett and Mike at the tables. There they were. Brett and Mike and Robert Cohn. Brett was wearing a Basque beret. So was Mike. Robert Cohn was bare headed and wearing his spectacles. Brett saw us coming and waved. Her eyes crinkled up as we came up to the table.

“Hello, you chaps!” she called.

Brett was happy. Mike had a way of getting an intensity of feeling into shaking hands. Robert Cohn shook hands because we were back.

“Where the hell have you been?” I asked.

“I brought them up here,” Cohn said.

“What rot,” Brett said. “We’d have gotten here earlier if you hadn’t come.”

“You’d never have gotten here.”

“What rot! You chaps are brown. Look at Bill.”

“Did you get good fishing?” Mike asked. “We wanted to join you.”

“It wasn’t bad. We missed you.”

“I wanted to come,” Cohn said, “but I thought I ought to bring them.”

“You bring us. What rot.”

“Was it really good?” Mike asked. “Did you take many?”

“Somedays we took a dozen apiece. There was an Englishman up there.”

“Named Harris,” Bill said. “Ever know him, Mike? He was in the war, too.”

“Fortunate fellow,” Mike said. “What times we had. How I wish those dear days were back.”

“Don’t be an ass.”

“Were you in the war, Mike?” Cohn asked.

“Was I not.”

“He was a very distinguished soldier,” Brett said. “Tell them about the time your horse bolted down Piccadilly.”

“I’ll not. I’ve told that four times.”

“You never told me,” Robert Cohn said.

“I’ll not tell that story. It reflects discredit on me.”

“Tell them about your medals.”

“I’ll not. That story reflects great discredit on me.”

“What story’s that?”

“Brett will tell you. She tells all the stories that reflect discredit on me.”

“Go on. Tell it, Brett.”

“Should I?”

“I’ll tell it myself.”

“What medals have you got, Mike?”

“I haven’t got any medals.”

“You must have some.”

“I suppose I’ve the usual medals. But I never sent in for them. One time there was this wopping big dinner and the Prince of Wales was to be there, and the cards said medals will be worn. So naturally I had no medals, and I stopped at my tailor’s and he was impressed by the invitation, and I thought that’s a good piece of business, and I said to him: ‘You’ve got to fix me up with some medals.’ He said: ‘What medals, sir?’ And I said: ‘Oh, any medals.

Just give me a few medals.' So he said: 'What medals *have* you, sir?' And I said: 'How should I know?' Did he think I spent all my time reading the bloody gazette? 'Just give me a good lot. Pick them out yourself.' So he got me some medals, you know, miniature medals, and handed me the box, and I put it in my pocket and forgot it. Well, I went to the dinner, and it was the night they'd shot Henry Wilson, so the Prince didn't come and the King didn't come, and no one wore any medals, and all these coves were busy taking off their medals, and I had mine in my pocket."

He stopped for us to laugh.

"Is that all?"

"That's all. Perhaps I didn't tell it right."

"You didn't," said Brett. "But no matter."

We were all laughing.

"Ah, yes," said Mike. "I know now. It was a damn dull dinner, and I couldn't stick it, so I left. Later on in the evening I found the box in my pocket. What's this? I said. Medals? Bloody military medals? So I cut them all off their backing—you know, they put them on a strip—and gave them all around. Gave one to each girl. Form of souvenir. They thought I was hell's own shakes of a soldier. Give away medals in a night club. Dashing fellow."

"Tell the rest," Brett said.

"Don't you think that was funny?" Mike asked. We were all laughing. "It was. I swear it was. Any rate, my tailor wrote me and wanted the medals back. Sent a man around. Kept on writing for months. Seems some chap had left them to be cleaned. Frightfully military cove. Set hell's own store by them." Mike paused. "Rotten luck for the tailor," he said.

"You don't mean it," Bill said. "I should think it would have been grand for the tailor."

"Frightfully good tailor. Never believe it to see me now," Mike said. "I used to pay him a hundred pounds a year just to keep him quiet. So he wouldn't send me any bills. Frightful blow to him when

I went bankrupt. It was right after the medals. Gave his letters rather a bitter tone."

"How did you go bankrupt?" Bill asked.

"Two ways," Mike said. "Gradually and then suddenly."

"What brought it on?"

"Friends," said Mike. "I had a lot of friends. False friends. Then I had creditors, too. Probably had more creditors than anybody in England."

"Tell them about in the court," Brett said.

"I don't remember," Mike said. "I was just a little tight."

"Tight!" Brett exclaimed. "You were blind!"

"Extraordinary thing," Mike said. "Met my former partner the other day. Offered to buy me a drink."

"Tell them about your learned counsel," Brett said.

"I will not," Mike said. "My learned counsel was blind, too. I say this is a gloomy subject. Are we going down and see these bulls unloaded or not?"

"Let's go down."

We called the waiter, paid, and started to walk through the town. I started off walking with Brett, but Robert Cohn came up and joined her on the other side. The three of us walked along, past the Ayuntamiento with the banners hung from the balcony, down past the market and down past the steep street that led to the bridge across the Arga. There were many people walking to go and see the bulls, and carriages drove down the hill and across the bridge, the drivers, the horses, and the whips rising above the walking people in the street. Across the bridge we turned up a road to the corrals. We passed a wine shop with a sign in the window: Good Wine 30 Centimes A Liter.

"That's where we'll go when funds get low," Brett said.

The woman standing in the door of the wine shop looked at us as we passed. She called to someone in the house and three girls came to the window and stared. They were staring at Brett.

At the gate of the corrals two men took tickets from the people that went in. We went in through the gate. There were trees inside and a low, stone house. At the far end was the stone wall of the corrals, with apertures in the stone that were like loop- holes running all along the face of each corral. A ladder led up to the top of the wall, and people were climbing up the ladder and spreading down to stand on the walls that separated the two corrals. As we came up the ladder, walking across the grass under the trees, we passed the big, gray painted cages with the bulls in them. There was one bull in each travelling box. They had come by train from a bull-breeding ranch in Castile, and had been unloaded off flat cars at the station and brought up here to be let out of their cages into the corrals. Each cage was stencilled with the name and the brand of the bull breeder.

We climbed up and found a place on the wall looking down into the corral. The stone walls were whitewashed, and there was straw on the ground and wooden feed boxes and water troughs set against the wall.

“Look up there,” I said.

Beyond the river rose the plateau of the town. All along the old walls and ramparts people were standing. The three lines of fortifications made three black lines of people. Above the walls there were heads in the windows of the houses. At the far end of the plateau boys had climbed into the trees.

“They must think something is going to happen,” Brett said. “They want to see the bulls.”

Mike and Bill were on the other wall across the pit of the corral. They waved to us. People who had come late were standing behind us, pressing against us when other people crowded them.

“Why don’t they start?” Robert Cohn asked.

A single mule was hitched to one of the cages and dragged it up against the gate in the corral wall. The men shoved and lifted it with crowbars into position against the gate. Men were standing on

the wall ready to pull up the gate of the corral and then the gate of the cage. At the other end of the corral a gate opened and two steers came in, swaying their heads and trotting, their lean flanks swinging. They stood together at the far end, their heads toward the gate where the bull would enter.

"They don't look happy," Brett said.

The men on top of the wall leaned back and pulled up the door of the corral. Then they pulled up the door of the cage.

I leaned way over the wall and tried to see into the cage. It was dark. Someone rapped on the cage with an iron bar. Inside something seemed to explode. The bull, striking into the wood from side to side with his horns, made a great noise. Then I saw a dark muzzle and the shadow of horns, and then, with a clattering on the wood in the hollow box, the bull charged and came out into the corral, skidding with his forefeet in the straw as he stopped, his head up, the great hump of muscle on his neck swollen tight, his body muscles quivering as he looked up at the crowd on the stone walls. The two steers backed away against the wall, their heads sunken, their eyes watching the bull.

The bull saw them and charged. A man shouted from behind one of the boxes and slapped his hat against the planks, and the bull, before he reached the steer, turned, gathered himself and charged where the man had been, trying to reach him behind the planks with a half-dozen quick, searching drives with the right horn.

"My God, isn't he beautiful?" Brett said. We were looking right down on him.

"Look how he knows how to use his horns," I said. "He's got a left and a right just like a boxer."

"Not really?"

"You watch."

"It goes too fast."

"Wait. There'll be another one in a minute."

They had backed up another cage into the entrance. In the far

corner a man, from behind one of the plank shelters, attracted the bull, and while the bull was facing away the gate was pulled up and a second bull came out into the corral.

He charged straight for the steers and two men ran out from behind the planks and shouted, to turn him. He did not change his direction and the men shouted: “Hah! Hah! Toro!” and waved their arms; the two steers turned sideways to take the shock, and the bull drove into one of the steers.

“Don’t look,” I said to Brett. She was watching, fascinated.

“Fine,” I said. “If it doesn’t buck you.”

“I saw it,” she said. “I saw him shift from his left to his right horn.”

“Damn good!”

The steer was down now, his neck stretched out, his head twisted, he lay the way he had fallen. Suddenly the bull left off and made for the other steer which had been standing at the far end, his head swinging, watching it all. The steer ran awkwardly and the bull caught him, hooked him lightly in the flank, and then turned away and looked up at the crowd on the walls, his crest of muscle rising. The steer came up to him and made as though to nose at him and the bull hooked perfunctorily. The next time he nosed at the steer and then the two of them trotted over to the other bull.

When the next bull came out, all three, the two bulls and the steer, stood together, their heads side by side, their horns against the newcomer. In a few minutes the steer picked the new bull up, quieted him down, and made him one of the herd. When the last two bulls had been unloaded the herd were all together.

The steer who had been gored had gotten to his feet and stood against the stone wall. None of the bulls came near him, and he did not attempt to join the herd.

We climbed down from the wall with the crowd, and had a last look at the bulls through the loopholes in the wall of the corral. They were all quiet now, their heads down. We got a carriage

outside and rode up to the café. Mike and Bill came in half an hour later. They had stopped on the way for several drinks.

We were sitting in the café.

"That's an extraordinary business," Brett said.

"Will those last ones fight as well as the first?" Robert Cohn asked. "They seemed to quiet down awfully fast."

"They all know each other," I said. "They're only dangerous when they're alone, or only two or three of them together."

"What do you mean, dangerous?" Bill said. "They all looked dangerous to me."

"They only want to kill when they're alone. Of course, if you went in there you'd probably detach one of them from the herd, and he'd be dangerous."

"That's too complicated," Bill said. "Don't you ever detach me from the herd, Mike."

"I say," Mike said, "they *were* fine bulls, weren't they? Did you see their horns?"

"Did I not," said Brett. "I had no idea what they were like."

"Did you see the one hit that steer?" Mike asked. "That was extraordinary."

"It's no life being a steer," Robert Cohn said.

"Don't you think so?" Mike said. "I would have thought you'd loved being a steer, Robert."

"What do you mean, Mike?"

"They lead such a quiet life. They never say anything and they're always hanging about so."

We were embarrassed. Bill laughed. Robert Cohn was angry. Mike went on talking.

"I should think you'd love it. You'd never have to say a word. Come on, Robert. Do say something. Don't just sit there."

"I said something, Mike. Don't you remember? About the steers."

"Oh, say something more. Say something funny. Can't you see

we're all having a good time here?"

"Come off it, Michael. You're drunk," Brett said.

"I'm not drunk. I'm quite serious. Is Robert Cohn going to follow Brett around like a steer all the time?"

"Shut up, Michael. Try and show a little breeding."

"Breeding be damned. Who has any breeding, anyway, except the bulls? Aren't the bulls lovely? Don't you like them, Bill? Why don't you say something, Robert? Don't sit there looking like a bloody funeral. What if Brett did sleep with you? She's slept with lots of better people than you."

"Shut up," Cohn said. He stood up. "Shut up, Mike."

"Oh, don't stand up and act as though you were going to hit me. That won't make any difference to me. Tell me, Robert. Why do you follow Brett around like a poor bloody steer? Don't you know you're not wanted? I know when I'm not wanted. Why don't you know when you're not wanted? You came down to San Sebastian where you weren't wanted, and followed Brett around like a bloody steer. Do you think that's right?"

"Shut up. You're drunk."

"Perhaps I am drunk. Why aren't you drunk? Why don't you ever get drunk, Robert? You know you didn't have a good time at San Sebastian because none of our friends would invite you on any of the parties. You can't blame them hardly. Can you? I asked them to. They wouldn't do it. You can't blame them, now. Can you? Now, answer me. Can you blame them?"

"Go to hell, Mike."

"I can't blame them. Can you blame them? Why do you follow Brett around? Haven't you any manners? How do you think it makes *me* feel?"

"You're a splendid one to talk about manners," Brett said.

"You've such lovely manners."

"Come on, Robert," Bill said.

"What do you follow her around for?" Bill stood up and took

hold of Cohn.

"Don't go," Mike said. "Robert Cohn's going to buy a drink."

Bill went off with Cohn. Cohn's face was sallow. Mike went on talking. I sat and listened for a while. Brett looked disgusted.

"I say, Michael, you might not be such a bloody ass," she interrupted. "I'm not saying he's not right, you know." She turned to me.

The emotion left Mike's voice. We were all friends together. "I'm not so damn drunk as I sounded," he said.

"I know you're not," Brett said.

"We're none of us sober," I said.

"I didn't say anything I didn't mean."

"But you put it so badly," Brett laughed.

"He was an ass, though. He came down to San Sebastian where he damn well wasn't wanted. He hung around Brett and just *looked* at her. It made me damned well sick."

"He did behave very badly," Brett said.

"Mark you. Brett's had affairs with men before. She tells me all about everything. She gave me this chap Cohn's letters to read. I wouldn't read them."

"Damned noble of you."

"No, listen, Jake. Brett's gone off with men. But they weren't ever Jews, and they didn't come and hang about afterward."

"Damned good chaps," Brett said. "It's all rot to talk about it. Michael and I understand each other."

"She gave me Robert Cohn's letters. I wouldn't read them."

"You wouldn't read any letters, darling. You wouldn't read mine."

"I can't read letters," Mike said. "Funny, isn't it?"

"You can't read anything."

"No. You're wrong there. I read quite a bit. I read when I'm at home."

"You'll be writing next," Brett said. "Come on, Michael. De buck

up. You've got to go through with this thing now. He's here, Don't spoil the fiesta."

"Well, let him behave, then."

"He'll behave. I'll tell him."

"You tell him, Jake. Tell him either he must behave or get out."

"Yes," I said, "it would be nice for me to tell him."

"Look, Brett. Tell Jake what Robert calls you. That *is* perfect, you know."

"Oh, no. I can't."

"Go on. We're all friends. Aren't we all friends, Jake?" "I can't tell him. It's too ridiculous."

"I'll tell him."

"You won't, Michael. Don't be an ass."

"He calls her Circe," Mike said. "He claims she turns men into swine. Damn good. I wish I were one of these literary chaps."

"He'd be good, you know," Brett said. "He writes a good letter."

"I know," I said. "He wrote me from San Sebastian."

"That was nothing," Brett said. "He can write a damned amusing letter."

"She made me write that. She was supposed to be ill."

"I damned well was, too."

"Come on," I said, "we must go in and eat."

"How should I meet Cohn?" Mike said. "Just act as though nothing had happened."

"It's quite all right with me," Mike said. "I'm not embarrassed."

"If he says anything, just say you were tight."

"Quite. And the funny thing is I think I was tight."

"Come on," Brett said. "Are these poisonous things paid for? I must bathe before dinner."

We walked across the square. It was dark and all around the square were the lights from the café s under the arcades. We walked across the gravel under the trees to the hotel.

They went upstairs and I stopped to speak with Montoya. "Well,

how did you like the bulls?" he asked.

"Good. They were nice bulls."

"They're all right"—Montoya shook his head—"but they're not too good."

"What didn't you like about them?"

"I don't know. They just didn't give me the feeling that they were so good."

"I know what you mean."

"They're all right."

"Yes. They're all right."

"How did your friends like them?"

"Fine."

"Good," Montoya said.

I went upstairs. Bill was in his room standing on the balcony looking out at the square. I stood beside him.

"Where's Cohn?"

"Upstairs in his room."

"How does he feel?"

"Like hell, naturally. Mike was awful. He's terrible when he's tight."

"He wasn't so tight."

"The hell he wasn't. I know what we had before we came to the café."

"He sobered up afterward."

"Good. He was terrible. I don't like Cohn, God knows, and I think it was a silly trick for him to go down to San Sebastian, but nobody has any business to talk like Mike."

"How'd you like the bulls?"

"Grand. It's grand the way they bring them out."

"Tomorrow come the Miuras."

"When does the fiesta start?"

"Day after tomorrow."

"We've got to keep Mike from getting so tight. That kind of stuff

is terrible."

"We'd better get cleaned up for supper."

"Yes. That will be a pleasant meal."

"Won't it?"

As a matter of fact, supper was a pleasant meal. Brett wore a black, sleeveless evening dress. She looked quite beautiful. Mike acted as though nothing had happened. I had to go up and bring Robert Cohn down. He was reserved and formal, and his face was still taut and sallow, but he cheered up finally. He could not stop looking at Brett. It seemed to make him happy. It must have been pleasant for him to see her looking so lovely, and know he had been away with her and that everyone knew it. They could not take that away from him. Bill was very funny. So was Michael. They were good together.

It was like certain dinners I remember from the war. There was much wine, an ignored tension, and a feeling of things coming that you could not prevent happening. Under the wine I lost the disgusted feeling and was happy. It seemed they were all such nice people.

Chapter XIV

I do not know what time I got to bed. I remember undressing, putting on a bathrobe, and standing out on the balcony. I knew I was quite drunk, and when I came in I put on the light over the head of the bed and started to read. I was reading a book by Turgenieff. Probably I read the same two pages over several times. It was one of the stories in *A Sportsman's Sketches*. I had read it before, but it seemed quite new. The country became very clear and the feeling of pressure in my head seemed to loosen. I was very drunk and I did not want to shut my eyes because the room would go round and round. If I kept on reading that feeling would pass.

I heard Brett and Robert Cohn come up the stairs. Cohn said good-night outside the door and went on up to his room. I heard Brett go into the room next door. Mike was already in bed. He had come in with me an hour before. He woke as she came in, and they talked together. I heard them laugh. I turned off the light and tried to go to sleep. It was not necessary to read anymore. I could shut my eyes without getting the wheeling sensation. But I could not sleep. There is no reason why because it is dark you should look at things differently from when it is light. The hell there isn't!

I figured that all out once, and for six months I never slept with the electric light off. That was another bright idea. To hell with women, anyway. To hell with you. Brett Ashley.

Women made such swell friends. Awfully swell. In the first place, you had to be in love with a woman to have a basis of friendship. I had been having Brett for a friend. I had not been

thinking about her side of it. I had been getting something for nothing. That only delayed the presentation of the bill. The bill always came. That was one of the swell things you could count on.

I thought I had paid for everything. Not like the woman pays and pays and pays. No idea of retribution or punishment. Just exchange of values. You gave up something and got something else. Or you worked for something. You paid some way for everything that was any good. I paid my way into enough things that I liked, so that I had a good time. Either you paid by learning about them, or by experience, or by taking chances, or by money. Enjoying living was learning to get your money's worth and knowing when you had it. You could get your money's worth. The world was a good place to buy in. It seemed like a fine philosophy. In five years, I thought, it will seem just as silly as all the other fine philosophies I've had.

Perhaps that wasn't true, though. Perhaps as you went along you did learn something. I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it. Maybe if you found out how to live in it you learned from that what it was all about.

I wished Mike would not behave so terribly to Cohn, though. Mike was a bad drunk. Brett was a good drunk. Bill was a good drunk. Cohn was never drunk. Mike was unpleasant after he passed a certain point. I liked to see him hurt Cohn. I wished he would not do it, though, because afterward it made me disgusted at myself. That was morality; things that made you disgusted afterward. No, that must be immorality. That was a large statement. What a lot of bilge I could think up at night. What rot, I could hear Brett say it. What rot! When you were with English you got into the habit of using English expressions in your thinking The English spoken language—the upper classes, anyway—must have fewer words than the Eskimo. Of course I didn't know anything about the Eskimo. Maybe the Eskimo was a fine language. Say the Cherokee. I didn't know anything about the Cherokee, either. The English talked with inflected phrases. One phrase to mean everything. I liked them,

though. I liked the way they talked. Take Harris. Still Harris was not the upper classes.

I turned on the light again and read. I read the Turgenieff. I knew that now, reading it in the over-sensitized state of my mind after much too much brandy, I would remember it somewhere, and afterward it would seem as though it had really happened to me. I would always have it. That was another good thing you paid for and then had. Sometime along toward daylight I went to sleep.

The next two days in Pamplona were quiet, and there were no more rows. The town was getting ready for the fiesta. Workmen put up the gateposts that were to shut off the side streets when the bulls were released from the corrals and came running through the streets in the morning on their way to the ring. The work- men dug holes and fitted in the timbers, each timber numbered for its regular place. Out on the plateau beyond the town employees of the bullring exercised picador horses, galloping them stiff-legged on the hard, sun-baked fields behind the bullring. The big gate of the bullring was open, and inside the amphitheatre was being swept. The ring was rolled and sprinkled, and carpenters replaced weakened or cracked planks in the barrera. Standing at the edge of the smooth rolled sand you could look up in the empty stands and see old women sweeping out the boxes.

Outside, the fence that led from the last street of the town to the entrance of the bullring was already in place and made a long pen; the crowd would come running down with the bulls behind them on the morning of the day of the first bullfight. Out across the plain, where the horse and cattle fair would be, some gypsies had camped under the trees. The wine and aguardiente sellers were putting up their booths. One booth advertised Anis Del Taro. The cloth sign hung against the planks in the hot sun. In the big square that was the centre of the town there was no change yet. We sat in the white wicker chairs on the terrasse of the café and watched the motor buses come in and unload peasants from the country coming in to

the market, and we watched the buses fill up and start out with peasants sitting with their saddle bags full of the things they had bought in the town. The tall gray motor buses were the only life of the square except for the pigeons and the man with a hose who sprinkled the gravelled square and watered the streets.

In the evening was the paseo. For an hour after dinner every one, all the good looking girls, the officers from the garrison, all the fashionable people of the town, walked in the street on one side of the square while the café tables filled with the regular after dinner crowd.

During the morning I usually sat in the café and read the Madrid papers and then walked in the town or out into the country. Sometimes Bill went along. Sometimes he wrote in his room. Robert Cohn spent the mornings studying Spanish or trying to get a shave at the barbershop. Brett and Mike never got up until noon. We all had a vermouth at the café. It was a quiet life and no one was drunk. I went to church a couple of times, once with Brett. She said she wanted to hear me go to confession, but I told her that not only was it impossible but it was not as interesting as it sounded, and, besides, it would be in a language she did not know. We met Cohn as we came out of church, and although it was obvious he had followed us, yet he was very pleasant and nice, and we all three went for a walk out to the gypsy camp, and Brett had her fortune told.

It was a good morning, there were high white clouds above the mountains. It had rained a little in the night and it was fresh and cool on the plateau, and there was a wonderful view. We all felt good and we felt healthy, and I felt quite friendly to Cohn. You could not be upset about anything on a day like that.

That was the last day before the fiesta.

Chapter XV

At noon of Sunday, the 6th of July, the fiesta exploded. There is no other way to describe it. People had been coming in all day from the country, but they were assimilated in the town and you did not notice them. The square was as quiet in the hot sun as on any other day. The peasants were in the outlying wine shops. There they were drinking, getting ready for the fiesta. They had come in so recently from the plains and the hills that it was necessary that they make their shifting in values gradually. They could not start in paying café prices. They got their money's worth in the wine shops. Money still had a definite value in hours worked and bushels of grain sold. Late in the fiesta it would not matter what they paid, nor where they bought.

Now on the day of the starting of the fiesta of San Fermin they had been in the wine shops of the narrow streets of the town since early morning. Going down the streets in the morning on the way to mass in the cathedral, I heard them singing through the open doors of the shops. They were warming up. There were many people at the eleven o'clock mass. San Fermin is also a religious festival.

I walked down the hill from the cathedral and up the street to the café on the square. It was a little before noon. Robert Cohn and Bill were sitting at one of the tables. The marble-topped tables and the white wicker chairs were gone. They were replaced by cast-iron tables and severe folding chairs. The café was like a battleship stripped for action. Today the waiters did not leave you alone all morning to read without asking if you wanted to order something.

A waiter came up as soon as I sat down.

"What are you drinking?" I asked Bill and Robert.

"Sherry," Cohn said.

"Jerez," I said to the waiter.

Before the waiter brought the sherry the rocket that announced the fiesta went up in the square. It burst and there was a gray ball of smoke high up above the Theatre Gayarre, across on the other side of the plaza. The ball of smoke hung in the sky like a shrapnel burst, and as I watched, another rocket came up to it, trickling smoke in the bright sunlight. I saw the bright flash as it burst and another little cloud of smoke appeared. By the time the second rocket had burst there were so many people in the arcade, that had been empty a minute before, that the waiter, holding the bottle high up over his head, could hardly get through the crowd to our table. People were coming into the square from all sides, and down the street we heard the pipes and the fifes and the drums coming. They were playing the *riau-riau* music, the pipes shrill and the drums pounding, and behind them came the men and boys dancing. When the fifers stopped they all crouched down in the street, and when the reed-pipes and the fifes shrilled, and the flat, dry, hollow drums tapped it out again, they all went up in the air dancing. In the crowd you saw only the heads and shoulders of the dancers going up and down.

In the square a man, bent over, was playing on a reed-pipe, and a crowd of children were following him shouting, and pulling at his clothes. He came out of the square, the children following him, and piped them past the café and down a side street. We saw his blank pockmarked face as he went by, piping, the children close behind him shouting and pulling at him.

"He must be the village idiot," Bill said. "My God! Look at that!"

Down the street came dancers. The street was solid with dancers, all men. They were all dancing in time behind their own fifers and drummers. They were a club of some sort, and all wore

workmen's blue smocks, and red handkerchiefs around their necks, and carried a great banner on two poles. The banner danced up and down with them as they came down surrounded by the crowd.

"Hurray for Wine! Hurray for the Foreigners!" was painted on the banner.

"Where are the foreigners?" Robert Cohn asked.

"We're the foreigners," Bill said.

All the time rockets were going up. The café tables were all full now. The square was emptying of people and the crowd was filling the cafés.

"Where's Brett and Mike?" Bill asked.

"I'll go and get them," Cohn said.

"Bring them here."

The fiesta was really started. It kept up day and night for seven days. The dancing kept up, the drinking kept up, the noise went on. The things that happened could only have happened during a fiesta. Everything became quite unreal finally and it seemed as though nothing could have any consequences. It seemed out of place to think of consequences during the fiesta. All during the fiesta you had the feeling, even when it was quiet, that you had to shout any remark to make it heard. It was the same feeling about any action. It was a fiesta and it went on for seven days.

That afternoon was the big religious procession. San Fermin was translated from one church to another. In the procession were all the dignitaries, civil and religious. We could not see them because the crowd was too great. Ahead of the formal procession and behind it danced the *riau-riau* dancers. There was one mass of yellow shirts dancing up and down in the crowd. All we could see of the procession through the closely pressed people that crowded all the side streets and curbs were the great giants, cigar store Indians, thirty feet high, Moors, a King and Queen, whirling and waltzing solemnly to the *riau-riau.*

They were all standing outside the chapel where San Fermin and

the dignitaries had passed in, leaving a guard of soldiers, the giants, with the men who danced in them standing beside their resting frames, and the dwarfs moving with their whacking bladders through the crowd. We started inside and there was a smell of incense and people filing back into the church, but Brett was stopped just inside the door because she had no hat, so we went out again and along the street that ran back from the chapel into town. The street was lined on both sides with people keeping their place at the curb for the return of the procession. Some dancers formed a circle around Brett and started to dance. They wore big wreaths of white garlics around their necks. They took Bill and me by the arms and put us in the circle. Bill started to dance, too. They were all chanting. Brett wanted to dance but they did not want her to. They wanted her as an image to dance around. When the song ended with the sharp *riau-riau!* they rushed us in to a wine shop.

We stood at the counter. They had Brett seated on a wine cask. It was dark in the wine shop and full of men singing, hard-voiced singing. Back of the counter they drew the wine from casks. I put down money for the wine, but one of the men picked it up and put it back in my pocket.

"I want a leather wine bottle," Bill said.

"There's a place down the street," I said. "I'll go get a couple."

The dancers did not want me to go out. Three of them were sitting on the high wine cask beside Brett, teaching her to drink out of the wineskins. They had hung a wreath of garlics around her neck. Someone insisted on giving her a glass. Somebody was teaching Bill a song. Singing it into his ear. Beating time on Bill's back.

I explained to them that I would be back. Outside in the street I went down the street looking for the shop that made leather wine bottles. The crowd was packed on the sidewalks and many of the shops were shuttered, and I could not find it. I walked as far as the church, looking on both sides of the street. Then I asked a man and

he took me by the arm and led me to it. The shutters were up but the door was open.

Inside it smelled of fresh tanned leather and hot tar. A man was stencilling completed wineskins. They hung from the roof in bunches. He took one down, blew it up, screwed the nozzle tight, and then jumped on it.

"See! It doesn't leak."

"I want another one, too. A big one."

He took down a big one that would hold a gallon or more, from the roof. He blew it up, his cheeks puffing ahead of the wineskin, and stood on the bota holding on to a chair.

"What are you going to do? Sell them in Bayonne?"

"No. Drink out of them."

He slapped me on the back.

"Good man. Eight pesetas for the two. The lowest price."

The man who was stencilling the new ones and tossing them into a pile stopped.

"It's true," he said. "Eight pesetas is cheap."

I paid and went out and along the street back to the wine shop.

It was darker than ever inside and very crowded. I did not see Brett and Bill, and someone said they were in the back room. At the counter the girl filled the two wineskins for me. One held two litres. The other held five litres. Filling them both cost three pesetas sixty centimos. Someone at the counter, that I had never seen before, tried to pay for the wine, but I finally paid for it myself. The man who had wanted to pay then bought me a drink. He would not let me buy one in return, but said he would take a rinse of the mouth from the new wine bag. He tipped the big five-litre bag up and squeezed it so the wine hissed against the back of his throat.

"All right," he said, and handed back the bag.

In the back room Brett and Bill were sitting on barrels surrounded by the dancers. Everybody had his arms on everybody else's shoulders, and they were all singing. Mike was sitting at a

table with several men in their shirt-sleeves, eating from a bowl of tuna fish, chopped onions and vinegar. They were all drinking wine and mopping up the oil and vinegar with pieces of bread.

"Hello, Jake. Hello!" Mike called. "Come here. I want you to meet my friends. We're all having an hors-d'oeuvre.'

I was introduced to the people at the table. They supplied their names to Mike and sent for a fork for me.

"Stop eating their dinner, Michael," Brett shouted from the wine barrels.

"I don't want to eat up your meal," I said when someone handed me a fork.

"Eat," he said. "What do you think it's here for?"

I unscrewed the nozzle of the big wine bottle and handed it around. Every one took a drink, tipping the wineskin at arm's length.

Outside, above the singing, we could hear the music of the procession going by.

"Isn't that the procession?" Mike asked.

"Nada," someone said. "It's nothing. Drink up. Lift the bottle."

"Where did they find you?" I asked Mike.

"Someone brought me here," Mike said. "They said you were here."

"Where's Cohn?"

"He's passed out," Brett called. "They've put him away somewhere."

"Where is he?"

"I don't know."

"How should we know," Bill said. "I think he's dead."

"He's not dead," Mike said. "I know he's not dead. He's just passed out on Anis del Mono."

As he said Anis del Mono one of the men at the table looked up, brought out a bottle from inside his smock, and handed it to me.

"No," I said. "No, thanks!"

“Yes. Yes. Arriba! Up with the bottle!”

I took a drink. It tasted of licorice and warmed all the way. I could feel it warming in my stomach.

“Where the hell is Cohn?”

“I don’t know,” Mike said. “I’ll ask. Where is the drunken comrade?” he asked in Spanish.

“You want to see him?”

“Yes,” I said.

“Not me,” said Mike. “This gent.”

The Anis del Mono man wiped his mouth and stood up.

“Come on.”

In a back room Robert Cohn was sleeping quietly on some wine casks. It was almost too dark to see his face. They had covered him with a coat and another coat was folded under his head. Around his neck and on his chest was a big wreath of twisted garlics.

“Let him sleep,” the man whispered. “He’s all right.”

Two hours later Cohn appeared. He came into the front room still with the wreath of garlics around his neck. The Spaniards shouted when he came in. Cohn wiped his eyes and grinned.

“I must have been sleeping,” he said.

“Oh, not at all,” Brett said.

“You were only dead,” Bill said.

“Aren’t we going to go and have some supper?” Cohn asked.

“Do you want to eat?”

“Yes. Why not? I’m hungry.”

“Eat those garlics, Robert,” Mike said. “I say. Do eat those garlics.”

Cohn stood there. His sleep had made him quite all right.

“Do let’s go and eat,” Brett said. “I must get a bath.”

“Come on,” Bill said. “Let’s translate Brett to the hotel.”

We said good-bye to many people and shook hands with many people and went out. Outside it was dark.

“What time is it do you suppose?” Cohn asked.

"It's tomorrow," Mike said. "You've been asleep two days."

"No," said Cohn, "what time is it?"

"It's ten o'clock."

"What a lot we've drunk."

"You mean what a lot *we've* drunk. You went to sleep."

Going down the dark streets to the hotel we saw the skyrockets going up in the square. Down the side streets that led to the square we saw the square solid with people, those in the centre all dancing.

It was a big meal at the hotel. It was the first meal of the prices being doubled for the fiesta, and there were several new courses. After the dinner we were out in the town. I remember resolving that I would stay up all night to watch the bulls go through the streets at six o'clock in the morning, and being so sleepy that J went to bed around four o'clock. The others stayed up.

My own room was locked and I could not find the key, so I went upstairs and slept on one of the beds in Cohn's room. The fiesta was going on outside in the night, but I was too sleepy for it to keep me awake. When I woke it was the sound of the rocket exploding that announced the release of the bulls from the corrals at the edge of town. They would race through the streets and out to the bullring. I had been sleeping heavily and I woke feeling I was too late. I put on a coat of Cohn's and went out on the balcony. Down below the narrow street was empty. All the balconies were crowded with people. Suddenly a crowd came down the street. They were all running, packed close together. They passed along and up the street toward the bullring and behind them came more men running faster, and then some stragglers who were really running. Behind them was a little bare space, and then the bulls galloping, tossing their heads up and down. It all went out of sight around the corner. One man fell, rolled to the gutter, and lay quiet. But the bulls went right on and did not notice him. They were all running together.

After they went out of sight a great roar came from the bullring. It kept on. Then finally the pop of the rocket that meant the bulls

had gotten through the people in the ring and into the corrals. I went back in the room and got into bed. I had been standing on the stone balcony in bare feet. I knew our crowd must have all been out at the bullring. Back in bed, I went to sleep.

Cohn woke me when he came in. He started to undress and went over and closed the window because the people on the balcony of the house just across the street were looking in.

"Did you see the show?" I asked.

"Yes. We were all there."

"Anybody get hurt?"

"One of the bulls got into the crowd in the ring and tossed six or eight people."

"How did Brett like it?"

"It was all so sudden there wasn't any time for it to bother anybody."

"I wish I'd been up."

"We didn't know where you were. We went to your room but it was locked."

"Where did you stay up?"

"We danced at some club."

"I got sleepy," I said.

"My gosh! I'm sleepy now," Cohn said. "Doesn't this thing ever stop?"

"Not for a week."

Bill opened the door and put his head in.

"Where were you, Jake?"

"I saw them go through from the balcony. How was it?"

"Grand."

"Where you going?"

"To sleep."

No one was up before noon. We ate at tables set out under the arcade. The town was full of people. We had to wait for a table. After lunch we went over to the Iruña. It had filled up, and as the

time for the bullfight came it got fuller, and the tables were crowded closer. There was a close, crowded hum that came every day before the bullfight. The café did not make this same noise at any other time, no matter how crowded it was. This hum went on, and we were in it and a part of it.

I had taken six seats for all the fights. Three of them were barreras, the first row at the ring-side, and three were sobrepuertos, seats with wooden backs, halfway up the amphitheatre. Mike thought Brett had best sit high up for her first time, and Cohn wanted to sit with them. Bill and I were going to sit in the barreras, and I gave the extra ticket to a waiter to sell. Bill said something to Cohn about what to do and how to look so he would not mind the horses. Bill had seen one season of bullfights.

"I'm not worried about how I'll stand it. I'm only afraid I may be bored," Cohn said.

"You think so?"

"Don't look at the horses, after the bull hits them," I said to Brett. "Watch the charge and see the picador try and keep the bull off, but then don't look again until the horse is dead if it's been hit."

"I'm a little nervy about it," Brett said. "I'm worried whether I'll be able to go through with it all right."

"You'll be all right. There's nothing but that horse part that will bother you, and they're only in for a few minutes with each bull. Just don't watch when it's bad."

"She'll be all right," Mike said. "I'll look after her."

"I don't think you'll be bored," Bill said.

"I'm going over to the hotel to get the glasses and the wineskin," I said. "See you back here. Don't get cock-eyed."

"I'll come along," Bill said. Brett smiled at us.

We walked around through the arcade to avoid the heat of the square.

"That Cohn gets me," Bill said. "He's got this Jewish superiority so strong that he thinks the only emotion he'll get out of the fight

will be being bored."

"We'll watch him with the glasses," I said.

"Oh, to hell with him!"

"He spends a lot of time there."

"I want him to stay there."

In the hotel on the stairs we met Montoya.

"Come on," said Montoya. "Do you want to meet Pedro Romero?"

"Fine," said Bill. "Let's go see him."

We followed Montoya up a flight and down the corridor.

"He's in room number eight," Montoya explained. "He's getting dressed for the bullfight."

Montoya knocked on the door and opened it. It was a gloomy room with a little light coming in from the window on the narrow street. There were two beds separated by a monastic partition. The electric light was on. The boy stood very straight and unsmiling in his bullfighting clothes. His jacket hung over the back of a chair. They were just finishing winding his sash. His black hair shone under the electric light. He wore a white linen shirt and the sword-handler finished his sash and stood up and stepped back. Pedro Romero nodded, seeming very far away and dignified when we shook hands. Montoya said something about what great aficionados we were, and that we wanted to wish him luck. Romero listened very seriously. Then he turned to me. He was the best looking boy I have ever seen.

"You go to the bullfight," he said in English.

"You know English," I said, feeling like an idiot.

"No," he answered, and smiled.

One of three men who had been sitting on the beds came up and asked us if we spoke French. "Would you like me to interpret for you? Is there anything you would like to ask Pedro Romero?"

We thanked him. What was there that you would like to ask? The boy was nineteen years old, alone except for his sword-

handler, and the three hangers-on, and the bullfight was to commence in twenty minutes. We wished him “Mucha suerte,” shook hands, and went out. He was standing, straight and handsome and altogether by himself, alone in the room with the hangers-on as we shut the door.

“He’s a fine boy, don’t you think so?” Montoya asked.

“He’s a good looking kid,” I said.

“He looks like a torero,” Montoya said. “He has the type.”

“He’s a fine boy.”

“We’ll see how he is in the ring,” Montoya said.

We found the big leather wine bottle leaning against the wall in my room, took it and the field glasses, locked the door, and went downstairs.

It was a good bullfight. Bill and I were very excited about Pedro Romero. Montoya was sitting about ten places away. After Romero had killed his first bull Montoya caught my eye and nodded his head. This was a real one. There had not been a real one for a long time. Of the other two matadors, one was very fair and the other was passable. But there was no comparison with Romero, although neither of his bulls was much.

Several times during the bullfight I looked up at Mike and Brett and Cohn, with the glasses. They seemed to be all right. Brett did not look upset. All three were leaning forward on the concrete railing in front of them.

“Let me take the glasses,” Bill said.

“Does Cohn look bored?” I asked.

“That kike!”

Outside the ring, after the bullfight was over, you could not move in the crowd. We could not make our way through but had to be moved with the whole thing, slowly, as a glacier, back to town. We had that disturbed emotional feeling that always comes after a bullfight, and the feeling of elation that comes after a good bullfight. The fiesta was going on. The drums pounded and the pipe

music was shrill, and everywhere the flow of the crowd was broken by patches of dancers. The dancers were in a crowd, so you did not see the intricate play of the feet. All you saw was the heads and shoulders going up and down, up and down. Finally, we got out of the crowd and made for the café. The waiter saved chairs for the others, and we each ordered an absinthe and watched the crowd in the square and the dancers.

"What do you suppose that dance is?" Bill asked.

"It's a sort of jota."

"They're not all the same," Bill said. "They dance differently to all the different tunes."

"It's swell dancing."

In front of us on a clear part of the street a company of boys were dancing. The steps were very intricate and their faces were intent and concentrated. They all looked down while they danced. Their rope-soled shoes tapped and spatted on the pavement. The toes touched. The heels touched. The balls of the feet touched. Then the music broke wildly and the step was finished and they were all dancing on up the street.

"Here come the gentry," Bill said.

They were crossing the street.

"Hello, men," I said.

"Hello, gents!" said Brett. "You saved us seats? How nice."

"I say," Mike said, "that Romero what'shisname is somebody. Am I wrong?"

"Oh, isn't he lovely," Brett said. "And those green trousers."

"Brett never took her eyes off them."

"I say, I must borrow your glasses tomorrow."

"How did it go?"

"Wonderfully! Simply perfect. I say, it is a spectacle!"

"How about the horses?"

"I couldn't help looking at them."

"She couldn't take her eyes off them," Mike said. "She's an

extraordinary wench."

"They do have some rather awful things happen to them,"

Brett said. "I couldn't look away, though."

"Did you feel all right?"

"I didn't feel badly at all."

"Robert Cohn did," Mike put in. "You were quite green, Robert."

"The first horse did bother me," Cohn solid.

"You weren't bored, were you?" asked Bill.

Cohn laughed.

"No. I wasn't bored. I wish you'd forgive me that."

"It's all right," Bill said, "so long as you weren't bored."

"He didn't look bored," Mike said. "I thought he was going to be sick."

"I never felt that bad. It was just for a minute."

"I thought he was going to be sick. You weren't bored, were you, Robert?"

"Let up on that, Mike. I said I was sorry I said it."

"He was, you know. He was positively green."

"Oh, shove it along, Michael."

"You mustn't ever get bored at your first bullfight, Robert," Mike said. "It might make such a mess."

"Oh, shove it along, Michael," Brett said.

"He said Brett was a sadist," Mike said. "Brett's not a sadist. She's just a lovely, healthy wench."

"Are you a sadist, Brett?" I asked. "Hope not."

"He said Brett was a sadist just because she has a good, healthy stomach."

"Won't be healthy long."

Bill got Mike started on something else than Cohn. The waiter brought the absinthe glasses.

"Did you really like it?" Bill asked Cohn.

"No, I can't say I liked it. I think it's a wonderful show."

"Gad, yes! What a spectacle!" Brett said.

“I wish they didn’t have the horse part,” Cohn said.

“They’re not important,” Bill said. “After a while you never notice anything disgusting.”

“It is a bit strong just at the start,” Brett said. “There’s a dreadful moment for me just when the bull starts for the horse.”

“The bulls were fine,” Cohn said.

“They were very good,” Mike said.

“I want to sit down below, next time.” Brett drank from her glass of absinthe.

“She wants to see the bullfighters close by,” Mike said.

“They are something,” Brett said. “That Romero lad is just a child.”

“He’s a damned good looking boy,” I said. “When we were up in his room I never saw a better looking kid.”

“How old do you suppose he is?”

“Nineteen or twenty.”

“Just imagine it.”

The bullfight on the second day was much better than on the first. Brett sat between Mike and me at the barrera, and Bill and Cohn went up above. Romero was the whole show. I do not think Brett saw any other bullfighter. No one else did either, except the hard-shelled technicians. It was all Romero. There were two other matadors, but they did not count. I sat beside Brett and explained to Brett what it was all about. I told her about watching the bull, not the horse, when the bulls charged the picadors, and got her to watching the picador place the point of his pic so that she saw what it was all about, so that it became more something that was going on with a definite end, and less of a spectacle with unexplained horrors. I had her watch how Romero took the bull away from a fallen horse with his cape, and how he held him with the cape and turned him, smoothly and suavely, never wasting the bull. She saw how Romero avoided every brusque movement and saved his bulls for the last when he wanted them, not winded and discomposed but

smoothly worn down. She saw how close Romero always worked to the bull, and I pointed out to her the tricks the other bullfighters used to make it look as though they were working closely. She saw why she liked Romero's cape work and why she did not like the others.

Romero never made any contortions, always it was straight and pure and natural in line. The others twisted themselves like corkscrews, their elbows raised, and leaned against the flanks of the bull after his horns had passed, to give a faked look of danger. Afterward, all that was faked turned bad and gave an unpleasant feeling. Romero's bullfighting gave real emotion, because he kept the absolute purity of line in his movements and always quietly and calmly let the horns pass him close each time. He did not have to emphasize their closeness. Brett saw how something that was beautiful done close to the bull was ridiculous if it were done a little way off. I told her how since the death of Joselito all the bullfighters had been developing a technic that simulated this appearance of danger in order to give a fake emotional feeling, while the bullfighter was really safe. Romero had the old thing, the holding of his purity of line through the maximum of exposure, while he dominated the bull by making him realize he was unattainable, while he prepared him for the killing.

"I've never seen him do an awkward thing," Brett said.

"You won't until he gets frightened," I said.

"He'll never be frightened," Mike said. "He knows too damned much."

"He knew everything when he started. The others can't ever learn what he was born with."

"And God, what looks," Brett said.

"I believe, you know, that she's falling in love with this bullfighter chap," Mike said.

"I wouldn't be surprised."

"Be a good chap, Jake. Don't tell her anything more about him.

Tell her how they beat their old mothers."

"Tell me what drunks they are."

"Oh, frightful," Mike said. "Drunk all day and spend all their time beating their poor old mothers."

"He looks that way," Brett said.

"Doesn't he?" I said.

They had hitched the mules to the dead bull and then the whips cracked, the men ran, and the mules, straining forward, their legs pushing, broke into a gallop, and the bull, one horn up, his head on its side, swept a swath smoothly across the sand and out the red gate.

"This next is the last one."

"Not really," Brett said. She leaned forward on the barrera. Romero waved his picadors to their places, then stood, his cape against his chest, looking across the ring to where the bull would come out.

After it was over we went out and were pressed tight in the crowd.

"These bullfights are hell on one," Brett said. "I'm limp as a rag."

"Oh, you'll get a drink," Mike said.

The next day Pedro Romero did not fight. It was Miura bulls, and a very bad bullfight. The next day there was no bullfight scheduled. But all day and all night the fiesta kept on.

Chapter XVI

In the morning it was raining. A fog had come over the mountains from the sea. You could not see the tops of the mountains. The plateau was dull and gloomy, and the shapes of the trees and the houses were changed. I walked out beyond the town to look at the weather. The bad weather was coming over the mountains from the sea.

The flags in the square hung wet from the white poles and the banners were wet and hung damp against the front of the houses, and in between the steady drizzle the rain came down and drove everyone under the arcades and made pools of water in the square, and the streets wet and dark and deserted; yet the fiesta kept up without any pause. It was only driven under cover.

The covered seats of the bullring had been crowded with people sitting out of the rain watching the concourse of Basque and Navarrais dancers and singers, and afterward the Val Carlos dancers in their costumes danced down the street in the rain, the drums sounding hollow and damp, and the chiefs of the bands riding ahead on their big, heavy-footed horses, their costumes wet, the horses' coats wet in the rain. The crowd was in the cafés and the dancers came in, too, and sat, their tight-wound white legs under the tables, shaking the water from their belled caps, and spreading their red and purple jackets over the chairs to dry. It was raining hard outside.

I left the crowd in the café and went over to the hotel to get shaved for dinner. I was shaving in my room when there was a

knock on the door.

"Come in," I called.

Montoya walked in.

"How are you?" he said.

"Fine," I said.

"No bulls today."

"No," I said, "nothing but rain."

"Where are your friends?"

"Over at the Iruña."

Montoya smiled his embarrassed smile.

"Look," he said. "Do you know the American ambassador?"

"Yes," I said. "Everybody knows the American ambassador."

"He's here in town, now."

"Yes," I said. "Everybody's seen them."

"I've seen them, too," Montoya said. He didn't say anything. I went on shaving.

"Sit down," I said. "Let me send for a drink."

"No, I have to go."

I finished shaving and put my face down into the bowl and washed it with cold water. Montoya was standing there looking more embarrassed.

"Look," he said. "I've just had a message from them at the Grand Hotel that they want Pedro Romero and Marcial Lalanda to come over for coffee tonight after dinner."

'Well," I said, "it can't hurt Marcial any."

"Marcial has been in San Sebastian all day. He drove over in a car this morning with Marquez. I don't think they'll be back tonight."

Montoya stood embarrassed. He wanted me to say something.

"Don't give Romero the message," I said.

"You think so?"

"Absolutely."

Montoya was very pleased.

“I wanted to ask you because you were an American,” he said.

“That’s what I’d do.”

“Look,” said Montoya. “People take a boy like that. They don’t know what he’s worth. They don’t know what he means. Any foreigner can flatter him. They start this Grand Hotel business, and in one year they’re through.”

“Like Algabeno,” I said.

“Yes, like Algabeno.”

“They’re a fine lot,” I said. “There’s one American woman down here now that collects bullfighters.”

“I know. They only want the young ones.”

“Yes,” I said. “The old ones get fat.”

“Or crazy like Gallo.”

“Well,” I said, “it’s easy. All you have to do is not give him the message.”

“He’s such a fine boy,” said Montoya. “He ought to stay with his own people. He shouldn’t mix in that stuff.”

“Won’t you have a drink?” I asked.

“No,” said Montoya, “I have to go.” He went out.

I went downstairs and out the door and took a walk around through the arcades around the square. It was still raining. I looked in at the Iruña for the gang and they were not there, so I walked on around the square and back to the hotel. They were eating dinner in the downstairs dining room.

They were well ahead of me and it was no use trying to catch them. Bill was buying shoe shines for Mike. Bootblacks opened the street door and each one Bill called over and started to work on Mike.

“This is the eleventh time my boots have been polished,” Mike said. “I say, Bill is an ass.”

The bootblacks had evidently spread the report. Another came in.

“Limpia botas?” he said to Bill.

“No,” said Bill. “For this Señor.”

The bootblack knelt down beside the one at work and started on Mike’s free shoe that shone already in the electric light.

“Bill’s a yell of laughter,” Mike said.

I was drinking red wine, and so far behind them that I felt a little uncomfortable about all this shoe shining. I looked around the room. At the next table was Pedro Romero. He stood up when I nodded, and asked me to come over and meet a friend. His table was beside ours, almost touching. I met the friend, a Madrid bullfight critic, a little man with a drawn face. I told Romero how much I liked his work, and he was very pleased. We talked Spanish and the critic knew a little French. I reached to our table for my wine bottle, but the critic took my arm. Romero laughed.

“Drink here,” he said in English.

He was very bashful about his English, but he was really very pleased with it, and as we went on talking he brought out words he was not sure of, and asked me about them. He was anxious to know the English for *Corrida de toros,* the exact translation. Bullfight he was suspicious of. I explained that bullfight in Spanish was the *lidia* of a *toro.* The Spanish word *corrida* means in English the running of bulls—the French translation is *Course de taureaux.* The critic put that in. There is no Spanish word for bullfight.

Pedro Romero said he had learned a little English in Gibraltar. He was born in Ronda. That is not far above Gibraltar. He started bullfighting in Malaga in the bullfighting school there. He had only been at it three years. The bullfight critic joked him about the number of *Malagueño* expressions he used. He was nineteen years old, he said. His older brother was with him as a banderillero, but he did not live in this hotel. He lived in a smaller hotel with the other people who worked for Romero. He asked me how many times I had seen him in the ring. I told him only three. It was really only two, but I did not want to explain after I had made the mistake.

“Where did you see me the other time? In Madrid?”

“Yes,” I lied. I had read the accounts of his two appearances in Madrid in the bullfight papers, so I was all right.

“The first or the second time?”

“The first.”

“I was very bad,” he said. “The second time I was better. You remember?” He turned to the critic.

He was not at all embarrassed. He talked of his work as something altogether apart from himself. There was nothing conceited or braggartly about him.

“I like it very much that you like my work,” he said. “But you haven’t seen it yet. Tomorrow, if I get a good bull, I will try and show it to you.”

When he said this he smiled, anxious that neither the bull- fight critic nor I would think he was boasting.

“I am anxious to see it,” the critic said. “I would like to be convinced.”

“He doesn’t like my work much.” Romero turned to me. He was serious.

The critic explained that he liked it very much, but that so far it had been incomplete.

‘Wait till tomorrow, if a good one comes out.”

“Have you seen the bulls for tomorrow?” the critic asked me.

“Yes. I saw them unloaded.”

Pedro Romero leaned forward.

“What did you think of them?”

“Very nice,” I said. “About twenty-six arrobas. Very short horns. Haven’t you seen them?”

“Oh, yes,” said Romero.

“They won’t weigh twenty-six arrobas,” said the critic.

“No,” said Romero.

“They’ve got bananas for horns,” the critic said.

“You call them bananas?” asked Romero. He turned to me and

smiled. *"You* wouldn't call them bananas?"

"No," I said. 'They're horns all right."

"They're very short," said Pedro Romero. "Very, very short. Still, they aren't bananas."

"I say, Jake," Brett called from the next table, "you *have* deserted us."

"Just temporarily," I said. "We're talking bulls."

"You *are* superior."

"Tell him that bulls have no balls," Mike shouted. He was drunk.

Romero looked at me inquiringly.

"Drunk," I said. "Borrachol Muy borracho!"

"You might introduce your friends," Brett said. She had not stopped looking at Pedro Romero. I asked them if they would like to have coffee with us. They both stood up. Romero's face was very brown. He had very nice manners.

I introduced them all around and they started to sit down, but there was not enough room, so we all moved over to the big table by the wall to have coffee. Mike ordered a bottle of Fundador and glasses for everybody. There was a lot of drunken talking.

"Tell him I think writing is lousy," Bill said. "Go on, tell him. Tell him I'm ashamed of being a writer."

Pedro Romero was sitting beside Brett and listening to her.

"Go on. Tell him!" Bill said.

Romero looked up smiling.

"This gentleman," I said, "is a writer."

Romero was impressed. "This other one, too," I said, pointing at Cohn.

"He looks like Villalta," Romero said, looking at Bill. "Rafael, doesn't he look like Villalta?"

"I can't see it," the critic said.

"Really," Romero said in Spanish. "He looks a lot like Villalta. What does the drunken one do?"

"Nothing."

“Is that why he drinks?”

“No. He’s waiting to marry this lady.”

“Tell him bulls have no balls!” Mike shouted, very drunk, from the other end of the table.

“What does he say?”

“He’s drunk.”

“Jake,” Mike called. “Tell him bulls have no balls!”

“You understand?” I said.

“Yes.”

I was sure he didn’t, so it was all right.

“Tell him Brett wants to see him put on those green pants.”

“Pipe down, Mike.”

“Tell him Brett is dying to know how he can get into those pants.”

“Pipe down.”

During this Romero was fingering his glass and talking with Brett. Brett was talking French and he was talking Spanish and a little English, and laughing.

Bill was filling the glasses.

“Tell him Brett wants to come into—”

“Oh, pipe down, Mike, for Christ’s sake!”

Romero looked up smiling. “Pipe down! I know that,” he said.

Just then Montoya came into the room. He started to smile at me, then he saw Pedro Romero with a big glass of cognac in his hand, sitting laughing between me and a woman with bare shoulders, at a table full of drunks. He did not even nod.

Montoya went out of the room. Mike was on his feet proposing a toast. “Let’s all drink to—” he began. “Pedro Romero,” I said. Everybody stood up. Romero took it very seriously, and we touched glasses and drank it down, I rushing it a little because Mike was trying to make it clear that that was not at all what he was going to drink to. But it went off all right, and Pedro Romero shook hands with everyone and he and the critic went out together.

“My God! he’s a lovely boy,” Brett said. “And how I would love to see him get into those clothes. He must use a shoehorn.”

“I started to tell him,” Mike began. “And Jake kept interrupting me. Why do you interrupt me? Do you think you talk Spanish better than I do?”

“Oh, shut up, Mike! Nobody interrupted you.”

“No, I’d like to get this settled.” He turned away from me. “Do you think you amount to something, Cohn? Do you think you belong here among us? People who are out to have a good time? For God’s sake don’t be so noisy, Cohn!”

“Oh, cut it out, Mike,” Cohn said.

“Do you think Brett wants you here? Do you think you add to the party? Why don’t you say something?”

“I said all I had to say the other night, Mike.”

“I’m not one of you literary chaps.” Mike stood shakily and leaned against the table. “I’m not clever. But I do know when I’m not wanted. Why don’t you see when you’re not wanted, Cohn? Go away. Go away, for God’s sake. Take that sad Jewish face away. Don’t you think I’m right?”

He looked at us.

“Sure,” I said. “Let’s all go over to the Iruña.”

“No. Don’t you think I’m right? I love that woman.”

“Oh, don’t start that again. Do shove it along, Michael,” Brett said.

“Don’t you think I’m right, Jake?”

Cohn still sat at the table. His face had the sallow, yellow look it got when he was insulted, but somehow he seemed to be enjoying it. The childish, drunken heroics of it. It was his affair with a lady of title.

“Jake,” Mike said. He was almost crying. “You know I’m right. Listen, you!” He turned to Cohn: “Go away! Go away now!”

“But I won’t go, Mike,” said Cohn.

“Then I’ll make you!” Mike started toward him around the table.

Cohn stood up and took off his glasses. He stood waiting, his face sallow, his hands fairly low, proudly and firmly waiting for the assault, ready to do battle for his lady love.

I grabbed Mike. “Come on to the café,” I said. “You can’t hit him here in the hotel.”

“Good!” said Mike. “Good idea!”

We started off. I looked back as Mike stumbled up the stairs and saw Cohn putting his glasses on again. Bill was sitting at the table pouring another glass of Fundador. Brett was sitting looking straight ahead at nothing.

Outside on the square it had stopped raining and the moon was trying to get through the clouds. There was a wind blowing. The military band was playing and the crowd was massed on the far side of the square where the fireworks specialist and his son were trying to send up fire balloons. A balloon would start up jerkily, on a great bias, and be torn by the wind or blown against the houses of the square. Some fell into the crowd. The magnesium flared and the fireworks exploded and chased about in the crowd. There was no one dancing in the square. The gravel was too wet.

Brett came out with Bill and joined us. We stood in the crowd and watched Don Manuel Orquito, the fireworks king, standing on a little platform, carefully starting the balloons with sticks, standing above the heads of the crowd to launch the balloons off into the wind. The wind brought them all down, and Don Manuel Orquito’s face was sweaty in the light of his complicated fireworks that fell into the crowd and charged and chased, sputtering and cracking, between the legs of the people. The people shouted as each new luminous paper bubble careened, caught fire, and fell.

“They’re razzing Don Manuel,” Bill said.

“How do you know he’s Don Manuel?” Brett said.

“His name’s on the programme. Don Manuel Orquito, the pirotecnico of esta ciudad.”

“Globos illuminados,” Mike said. “A collection of globos

illuminados. That's what the paper said."

The wind blew the band music away.

"I say, I wish one would go up," Brett said. "That Don Manuel chap is furious."

"He's probably worked for weeks fixing them to go off, spelling out 'Hail to San Fermin,'" Bill said.

"Globos illuminados," Mike said. "A bunch of bloody globos illuminados."

"Come on," said Brett. "We can't stand here."

"Her ladyship wants a drink," Mike said.

"How you know things," Brett said.

Inside, the café was crowded and very noisy. No one noticed us come in. We could not find a table. There was a great noise going on.

"Come on, let's get out of here," Bill said.

Outside the paseo was going in under the arcade. There were some English and Americans from Biarritz in sport clothes scattered at the tables. Some of the women stared at the people going by with lorgnons. We had acquired, at some time, a friend of Bill's from Biarritz. She was staying with another girl at the Grand Hotel. The other girl had a headache and had gone to bed.

"Here's the pub," Mike said. It was the Bar Milano, a small, tough bar where you could get food and where they danced in the back room. We all sat down at a table and ordered a bottle of Fundador. The bar was not full. There was nothing going on.

"This is a hell of a place," Bill said. "It's too early."

"Let's take the bottle and come back later," Bill said. "I don't want to sit here on a night like this."

"Let's go and look at the English," Mike said. "I love to look at the English."

"They're awful," Bill said. "Where did they all come from?"

"They come from Biarritz," Mike said. "They come to see the last day of the quaint little Spanish fiesta."

“I’ll festa them,” Bill said.

“You’re an extraordinarily beautiful girl.” Mike turned to Bill’s friend. “When did you come here?”

“Come off it, Michael.”

“I say, she is a lovely girl. Where have I been? Where have I been looking all this while? You’re a lovely thing. *Have* we met? Come along with me and Bill. We’re going to festa the English.”

“I’ll festa them,” Bill said. “What the hell are they doing at this fiesta?”

“Come on,” Mike said. “Just us three. We’re going to festa the bloody English. I hope you’re not English? I’m Scotch. I hate the English. I’m going to festa them. Come on, Bill.”

Through the window we saw them, all three arm in arm, going toward the café. Rockets were going up in the square.

“I’m going to sit here,” Brett said.

“I’ll stay with you,” Cohn said.

“Oh, don’t!” Brett said. “For God’s sake, go off somewhere. Can’t you see Jake and I want to talk?”

“I didn’t,” Cohn said. “I thought I’d sit here because I felt a little tight.”

“What a hell of a reason for sitting with anyone. If you’re tight, go to bed. Go on to bed.”

“Was I rude enough to him?” Brett asked. Cohn was gone. “My God! I’m so sick of him!”

“He doesn’t add much to the gayety.”

“He depresses me so.”

“He’s behaved very badly.”

“Damned badly. He had a chance to behave so well.”

“He’s probably waiting just outside the door now.”

“Yes. He would. You know I do know how he feels. He can’t believe it didn’t mean anything.”

“I know.”

“Nobody else would behave as badly. Oh, I’m so sick of the

whole thing. And Michael. Michael's been lovely, too."

"It's been damned hard on Mike."

"Yes. But he didn't need to be a swine."

"Everybody behaves badly," I said. "Give them the proper chance."

"You wouldn't behave badly." Brett looked at me.

"I'd be as big an ass as Cohn," I said.

"Darling, don't let's talk a lot of rot."

"All right. Talk about anything you like."

"Don't be difficult. You're the only person I've got, and I feel rather awful tonight."

"You've got Mike."

"Yes, Mike. Hasn't he been pretty?"

"Well," I said, "it's been damned hard on Mike, having Cohn around and seeing him with you."

"Don't I know it, darling? Please don't make me feel any worse than I do."

Brett was nervous as I had never seen her before. She kept looking away from me and looking ahead at the wall.

"Want to go for a walk?"

"Yes. Come on."

I corked up the Fundador bottle and gave it to the bartender.

"Let's have one more drink of that," Brett said. "My nerves are rotten."

We each drank a glass of the smooth amontillado brandy.

"Come on," said Brett.

As we came out the door I saw Cohn walk out from under the arcade.

"He *was* there," Brett said. "He can't be away from you."

"Poor devil!"

"I'm not sorry for him. I hate him, myself."

"I hate him, too," she shivered. "I hate his damned suffering."

We walked arm in arm down the side street away from the

crowd and the lights of the square. The street was dark and wet, and we walked along it to the fortifications at the edge of town. We passed wine shops with light coming out from their doors onto the black, wet street, and sudden bursts of music.

"Want to go in?"

"No."

We walked out across the wet grass and onto the stone wall of the fortifications. I spread a newspaper on the stone and Brett sat down. Across the plain it was dark, and we could see the mountains. The wind was high up and took the clouds across the moon. Below us were the dark pits of the fortifications. Behind were the trees and the shadow of the cathedral, and the town silhouetted against the moon.

"Don't feel bad," I said.

"I feel like hell," Brett said. "Don't let's talk."

We looked out at the plain. The long lines of trees were dark in the moonlight. There were the lights of a car on the road climbing the mountain. Up on the top of the mountain we saw the lights of the fort. Below to the left was the river. It was high from the rain, and black and smooth. Trees were dark along the banks. We sat and looked out. Brett stared straight ahead. Suddenly she shivered.

"It's cold."

"Want to walk back?"

"Through the park."

We climbed down. It was clouding over again. In the park it was dark under the trees.

"Do you still love me, Jake?"

"Yes," I said.

"Because I'm a goner," Brett said.

"How?"

"I'm a goner. I'm mad about the Romero boy. I'm in love with him, I think."

"I wouldn't be if I were you."

“I can’t help it. I’m a goner. It’s tearing me all up inside.”

“Don’t do it.”

“I can’t help it. I’ve never been able to help anything.”

“You ought to stop it.”

“How can I stop it? I can’t stop things. Feel that?”

Her hand was trembling.

“I’m like that all through.”

“You oughtn’t to do it.”

“I can’t help it. I’m a goner now, anyway. Don’t you see the difference?”

“No.”

“I’ve got to do something. I’ve got to do something I really want to do. I’ve lost my self-respect.”

“You don’t have to do that.”

“Oh, darling, don’t be difficult. What do you think it’s meant to have that damned Jew about, and Mike the way he’s acted?”

“Sure.”

“I can’t just stay tight all the time.”

“No.”

“Oh, darling, please stay by me. Please stay by me and see me through this.”

“Sure.”

“I don’t say it’s right. It is right though for me. God knows, I’ve never felt such a bitch.”

“What do you want me to do?”

“Come on,” Brett said. “Let’s go and find him.”

Together we walked down the gravel path in the park in the dark, under the trees and then out from under the trees and past the gate into the street that led into town.

Pedro Romero was in the café. He was at a table with other bullfighters and bullfight critics. They were smoking cigars. When we came in they looked up. Romero smiled and bowed. We sat down at a table half-way down the room.

“Ask him to come over and have a drink.”

“Not yet. He’ll come over.”

“I can’t look at him.”

“He’s nice to look at,” I said.

“I’ve always done just what I wanted.”

“I know.”

“I do feel such a bitch.”

“Well,” I said.

“My God!” said Brett, “the things a woman goes through.”

“Yes?”

“Oh, I do feel such a bitch.”

I looked across at the table. Pedro Romero smiled. He said something to the other people at his table, and stood up. He came over to our table. I stood up and we shook hands.

“Won’t you have a drink?”

“You must have a drink with me,” he said. He seated himself, asking Brett’s permission without saying anything. He had very nice manners. But he kept on smoking his cigar. It went well with his face.

“You like cigars?” I asked.

“Oh, yes. I always smoke cigars.”

It was part of his system of authority. It made him seem older. I noticed his skin. It was clear and smooth and very brown. There was a triangular scar on his cheekbone. I saw he was watching Brett. He felt there was something between them. He must have felt it when Brett gave him her hand. He was being very careful. I think he was sure, but he did not want to make any mistake.

“You fight tomorrow?” I said.

“Yes,” he said. “Algabeno was hurt today in Madrid. Did you hear?”

“No,” I said. “Badly?”

He shook his head.

“Nothing. Here,” he showed his hand. Brett reached out and

spread the fingers apart.

"Oh!" he said in English, "you tell fortunes?"

"Sometimes. Do you mind?"

"No. I like it." He spread his hand flat on the table. "Tell me I live for always, and be a millionaire."

He was still very polite, but he was surer of himself. "Look," he said, "do you see any bulls in my hand?"

He laughed. His hand was very fine and the wrist was small.

"There are thousands of bulls," Brett said. She was not at all nervous now. She looked lovely.

"Good," Romero laughed. "At a thousand duros apiece," he said to me in Spanish. "Tell me some more."

"It's a good hand," Brett said. "I think he'll live a long time."

"Say it to me. Not to your friend."

"I said you'd live a long time."

"I know it," Romero said. "I'm never going to die."

I tapped with my fingertips on the table. Romero saw it. He shook his head.

"No. Don't do that. The bulls are my best friends."

I translated to Brett.

"You kill your friends?" she asked.

"Always," he said in English, and laughed. "So they don't kill me." He looked at her across the table.

"You know English well."

"Yes," he said. "Pretty well, sometimes. But I must not let anybody know. It would be very bad, a torero who speaks English."

"Why?" asked Brett.

"It would be bad. The people would not like it. Not yet."

"Why not?"

"They would not like it. Bullfighters are not like that."

"What are bullfighters like?"

He laughed and tipped his hat down over his eyes and changed the angle of his cigar and the expression of his face.

“Like at the table,” he said. I glanced over. He had mimicked exactly the expression of Nacional. He smiled, his face natural again. “No. I must forget English.”

“Don’t forget it, yet,” Brett said. “No?”

“No.”

“All right.”

He laughed again.

“I would like a hat like that,” Brett said “Good. I’ll get you one.”

“Right. See that you do.”

“I will. I’ll get you one tonight.”

I stood up. Romero rose, too.

“Sit down,” I said. “I must go and find our friends and bring them here.”

He looked at me. It was a final look to ask if it were understood. It was understood all right.

“Sit down,” Brett said to him. “You must teach me Spanish.” He sat down and looked at her across the table. I went out. The hard-eyed people at the bullfighter table watched me go. It was not pleasant. When I came back and looked in the café, twenty minutes later, Brett and Pedro Romero were gone. The coffee glasses and our three empty cognac glasses were on the table. A waiter came with a cloth and picked up the glasses and mopped off the table.

Chapter XVII

Outside the Bar Milano I found Bill and Mike and Edna. Edna was the girl's name.

"We've been thrown out," Edna said.

"By the police," said Mike. "There's some people in there that don't like me."

"I've kept them out of four fights," Edna said. "You've got to help me."

Bill's face was red.

"Come back in, Edna," he said. "Go on in there and dance with Mike."

"It's silly," Edna said. "There'll just be another row."

"Damned Biarritz swine," Bill said.

"Come on," Mike said. "After all, it's a pub. They can't occupy a whole pub."

"Good old Mike," Bill said. "Damned English swine come here and insult Mike and try and spoil the fiesta."

"They're so bloody," Mike said. "I hate the English."

"They can't insult Mike," Bill said. "Mike is a swell fellow. They can't insult Mike. I won't stand it. Who cares if he is a damn bankrupt?" His voice broke.

"Who cares?" Mike said. "I don't care. Jake doesn't care. Do *you* care?"

"No," Edna said. "Are you a bankrupt?"

"Of course I am. You don't care, do you, Bill?" Bill put his arm around Mike's shoulder.

“I wish to hell I was a bankrupt. I’d show those bastards.”

“They’re just English,” Mike said. “It never makes any difference what the English say.”

“The dirty swine,” Bill said. “I’m going to clean them out.”

“Bill,” Edna looked at me. “Please don’t go in again, Bill. They’re so stupid.”

“That’s it,” said Mike. “They’re stupid. I knew that was what it was.”

“They can’t say things like that about Mike,” Bill said.

“Do you know them?” I asked Mike.

“No. I never saw them. They say they know me.”

“I won’t stand it,” Bill said.

“Come on. Let’s go over to the Suizo,” I said.

“They’re a bunch of Edna’s friends from Biarritz,” Bill said.

“They’re simply stupid,” Edna said.

“One of them’s Charley Blackman, from Chicago,” Bill said.

“I was never in Chicago,” Mike said.

Edna started to laugh and could not stop.

“Take me away from here,” she said, “you bankrupts.”

“What kind of a row was it?” I asked Edna. We were walking across the square to the Suizo. Bill was gone.

“I don’t know what happened, but someone had the police called to keep Mike out of the back room. There were some people that had known Mike at Cannes. What’s the matter with Mike?”

“Probably he owes them money,” I said. “That’s what people usually get bitter about.”

In front of the ticket-booths out in the square there were two lines of people waiting. They were sitting on chairs or crouched on the ground with blankets and newspapers around them. They were waiting for the wickets to open in the morning to buy tickets for the bullfight. The night was clearing and the moon was out. Some of the people in the line were sleeping.

At the Café Suizo we had just sat down and ordered Fundador

when Robert Cohn came up.

"Where's Brett?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"She was with you."

"She must have gone to bed."

"She's not."

"I don't know where she is."

His face was sallow under the light. He was standing up.

"Tell me where she is."

"Sit down," I said. "I don't know where she is."

"The hell you don't!"

"You can shut your face."

"Tell me where Brett is."

"I'll not tell you a damn thing."

"You know where she is."

"If I did I wouldn't tell you."

"Oh, go to hell, Cohn," Mike called from the table. "Brett's gone off with the bullfighter chap. They're on their honeymoon."

"You shut up."

"Oh, go to hell!" Mike said languidly.

"Is that where she is?" Cohn turned to me.

"Go to hell!"

"She was with you. Is that where she is?"

"Go to hell!"

"I'll make you tell me"—he stepped forward—"you damned pimp."

I swung at him and he ducked. I saw his face duck sideways in the light. He hit me and I sat down on the pavement. As I started to get on my feet he hit me twice. I went down backward under a table. I tried to get up and felt I did not have any legs. I felt I must get on my feet and try and hit him. Mike helped me up. Someone poured a carafe of water on my head. Mike had an arm around me, and I found I was sitting on a chair. Mike was pulling at my ears.

“I say, you were cold,” Mike said. “Where the hell were you?”

“Oh, I was around.”

“You didn’t want to mix in it?”

“He knocked Mike down, too,” Edna said.

“He didn’t knock me out,” Mike said. “I just lay there.”

“Does this happen every night at your fiestas?” Edna asked.

“Wasn’t that Mr. Cohn?”

“I’m all right,” I said. “My head’s a little wobbly.”

There were several waiters and a crowd of people standing around.

“Vaya!” said Mike. “Get away. Go on.”

The waiters moved the people away.

“It was quite a thing to watch,” Edna said. “He must be a boxer.”

“He is.”

“I wish Bill had been here,” Edna said. “I’d like to have seen Bill knocked down, too. I’ve always wanted to see Bill knocked down. He’s so big.”

“I was hoping he would knock down a waiter,” Mike said, “and get arrested. I’d like to see Mr. Robert Cohn in jail.”

“No,” I said.

“Oh, no,” said Edna. “You don’t mean that.”

“I do, though,” Mike said. “I’m not one of these chaps likes being knocked about. I never play games, even.”

Mike took a drink.

“I never liked to hunt, you know. There was always the danger of having a horse fall on you. How do you feel, Jake?”

“All right.”

“You’re nice,” Edna said to Mike. “Are you really a bankrupt?”

“I’m a tremendous bankrupt,” Mike said. “I owe money to everybody. Don’t you owe any money?”

“Tons.”

“I owe everybody money,” Mike said. “I borrowed a hundred

pesetas from Montoya tonight."

"The hell you did," I said.

"I'll pay it back," Mike said. "I always pay everything back."

"That's why you're a bankrupt, isn't it?" Edna said.

I stood up. I had heard them talking from a long way away. It all seemed like some bad play.

"I'm going over to the hotel," I said. Then I heard them talking about me.

"Is he all right?" Edna asked. "We'd better walk with him."

"I'm all right," I said. "Don't come. I'll see you all later."

I walked away from the café. They were sitting at the table. I looked back at them and at the empty tables. There was a waiter sitting at one of the tables with his head in his hands.

Walking across the square to the hotel everything looked new and changed. I had never seen the trees before. I had never seen the flagpoles before, nor the front of the theatre. It was all different. I felt as I felt once corning home from an out-of-town football game. I was carrying a suitcase with my football things in it, and I walked up the street from the station in the town I had lived in all my life and it was all new. They were raking the lawns and burning leaves in the road, and I stopped for a long time and watched. It was all strange. Then I went on, and my feet seemed to be a long way off, and everything seemed to come from a long way off, and I could hear my feet walking a great distance away. I had been kicked in the head early in the game. It was like that crossing the square. It was like that going up the stairs in the hotel. Going up the stairs took a long time, and I had the feeling that I was carrying my suitcase. There was a light in the room. Bill carne out and met me in the hall.

"Say," he said, "go up and see Cohn. He's been in a jam, and he's asking for you."

"The hell with him."

"Go on. Go on up and see him."

I did not want to climb another flight of stairs. “What are you looking at me that way for?”

“I’m not looking at you. Go on up and see Cohn. He’s in bad shape.”

“You were drunk a little while ago,” I said.

“I’m drunk now,” Bill said. “But you go up and see Cohn. He wants to see you.”

“All right,” I said. It was just a matter of climbing more stairs.

I went on up the stairs carrying my phantom suitcase. I walked down the hall to Cohn’s room. The door was shut and I knocked.

“Who is it?”

“Barnes.”

“Come in, Jake.”

I opened the door and went in, and set down my suitcase. There was no light in the room. Cohn was lying, face down, on the bed in the dark.

“Hello, Jake.”

“Don’t call me Jake.”

I stood by the door. It was just like this that I had come home. Now it was a hot bath that I needed. A deep, hot bath, to lie back in.

“Where’s the bathroom?” I asked.

Cohn was crying. There he was, face down on the bed, crying. He had on a white polo shirt, the kind he’d worn at Princeton.

“I’m sorry, Jake. Please forgive me.”

“Forgive you, hell.”

“Please forgive me, Jake.”

I did not say anything. I stood there by the door.

“I was crazy. You must see how it was.”

“Oh, that’s all right.”

“I couldn’t stand it about Brett.”

“You called me a pimp.”

I did not care. I wanted a hot bath. I wanted a hot bath in deep

water.

"I know. Please don't remember it. I was crazy."

"That's all right."

He was crying. His voice was funny. He lay there in his white shirt on the bed in the dark. His polo shirt.

"I'm going away in the morning."

He was crying without making any noise.

"I just couldn't stand it about Brett. I've been through hell, Jake. It's been simply hell. When I met her down here Brett treated me as though I were a perfect stranger. I just couldn't stand it. We lived together at San Sebastian. I suppose you know it. I can't stand it anymore."

He lay there on the bed.

"Well," I said, "I'm going to take a bath."

"You were the only friend I had, and I loved Brett so."

"Well," I said, "so long."

"I guess it isn't any use," he said. "I guess it isn't any damn use."

"What?"

"Everything. Please say you forgive me, Jake."

"Sure," I said. "It's all right."

"I felt so terribly. I've been through such hell, Jake. Now everything's gone. Everything."

'Well," I said, "so long. I've got to go."

He rolled over, sat on the edge of the bed, and then stood up.

"So long, Jake," he said. "You'll shake hands, won't you?"

"Sure. Why not?"

We shook hands. In the dark I could not see his face very well.

"Well," I said, "see you in the morning."

"I'm going away in the morning."

"Oh, yes," I said.

I went out. Cohn was standing in the door of the room.

"Are you all right, Jake?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," I said. "I'm all right."

I could not find the bathroom. After a while I found it. There was a deep stone tub. I turned on the taps and the water would not run. I sat down on the edge of the bathtub. When I got up to go I found I had taken off my shoes. I hunted for them and found them and carried them downstairs. I found my room and went inside and undressed and got into bed.

I woke with a headache and the noise of the bands going by in the street. I remembered I had promised to take Bill's friend Edna to see the bulls go through the street and into the ring. I dressed and went downstairs and out into the cold early morning. People were crossing the square, hurrying toward the bullring. Across the square were the two lines of men in front of the ticket booths. They were still waiting for the tickets to go on sale at seven o'clock. I hurried across the street to the café. The waiter told me that my friends had been there and gone.

"How many were they?"

"Two gentlemen and a lady."

That was all right. Bill and Mike were with Edna. She had been afraid last night they would pass out. That was why I was to be sure to take her. I drank the coffee and hurried with the other people toward the bullring. I was not groggy now. There was only a bad headache. Everything looked sharp and clear, and the town smelt of the early morning.

The stretch of ground from the edge of the town to the bullring was muddy. There was a crowd all along the fence that led to the ring, and the outside balconies and the top of the bullring were solid with people. I heard the rocket and I knew I could not get into the ring in time to see the bulls come in, so I shoved through the crowd to the fence. I was pushed close against the planks of the fence. Between the two fences of the runway the police were clearing the crowd along. They walked or trotted on into the bullring. Then people commenced to come running. A drunk slipped and fell. Two policemen grabbed him and rushed him over to the

fence. The crowd was running fast now. There was a great shout from the crowd, and putting my head through between the boards I saw the bulls just coming out of the street into the long running pen. They were going fast and gaining on the crowd. Just then another drunk started out from the fence with a blouse in his hands. He wanted to do cape work with the bulls. The two policemen tore out, collared him, one hit him with a club, and they dragged him against the fence and stood flattened out against the fence as the last of the crowd and the bulls went by. There were so many people running ahead of the bulls that the mass thickened and slowed up going through the gate into the ring, and as the bulls passed, galloping together, heavy, muddy-sided, horns swinging, one shot ahead, caught a man in the running crowd in the back and lifted him in the air. Both the man's arms were by his sides, his head went back as the horn went in, and the bull lifted him and then dropped him. The bull picked another man running in front, but the man disappeared into the crowd, and the crowd was through the gate and into the ring with the bulls behind them. The red door of the ring went shut, the crowd on the outside balconies of the bullring was pressing through to the inside, there was a shout, then another shout.

The man who had been gored lay face down in the trampled mud. People climbed over the fence, and I could not see the man because the crowd was so thick around him. From inside the ring came the shouts. Each shout meant a charge by some bull into the crowd. You could tell by the degree of intensity in the shout how bad a thing it was that was happening. Then the rocket went up that meant the steers had gotten the bulls out of the ring and into the corrals. I left the fence and started back toward the town.

Back in the town I went to the café to have a second coffee and some buttered toast. The waiters were sweeping out the café and mopping off the tables. One came over and took my order.

"Anything happen at the encierro?"

"I didn't see it all. One man was badly cogido."

"Where?"

"Here." I put one hand on the small of my back and the other on my chest, where it looked as though the horn must have come through. The waiter nodded his head and swept the crumbs from the table with his cloth.

"Badly cogido," he said. "All for sport. All for pleasure."

He went away and came back with the long-handled coffee and milk pots. He poured the milk and coffee. It came out of the long spouts in two streams into the big cup. The waiter nodded his head.

"Badly cogido through the back," he said. He put the pots down on the table and sat down in the chair at the table. "A big horn wound. All for fun. Just for fun. What do you think of that?"

"I don't know."

"That's it. All for fun. Fun, you understand."

"You're not an aficionado?"

"Me? What are bulls? Animals. Brute animals." He stood up and put his hand on the small of his back. "Right through the back. A cornada right through the back. For fun—you understand."

He shook his head and walked away, carrying the coffeepots. Two men were going by in the street. The waiter shouted to them. They were grave-looking. One shook his head. "Muerto!" he called.

The waiter nodded his head. The two men went on. They were on some errand. The waiter came over to my table.

"You hear? Muerto. Dead. He's dead. With a horn through him. All for morning fun. Es muy flamenco."

"It's bad."

"Not for me," the waiter said. "No fun in that for me."

Later in the day we learned that the man who was killed was named Vicente Girones, and came from near Tafalla. The next day in the paper we read that he was twenty-eight years old, and had a farm, a wife, and two children. He had continued to come to the fiesta each year after he was married. The next day his wife came in

from Tafalla to be with the body, and the day after there was a service in the chapel of San Fermin, and the coffin was carried to the railway station by members of the dancing and drinking society of Tafalla. The drums marched ahead, and there was music on the fifes, and behind the men who carried the coffin walked the wife and two children. . . . Behind them marched all the members of the dancing and drinking societies of Pamplona, Estella, Tafalla, and Sanguesa who could stay over for the funeral. The coffin was loaded into the baggage car of the train, and the widow and the two children rode, sitting, all three together, in an open third-class railway carriage. The train started with a jerk, and then ran smoothly, going down grade around the edge of the plateau and out into the fields of grain that blew in the wind on the plain on the way to Tafalla.

The bull who killed Vicente Girones was named Bocanegra, was Number 118 of the bull breeding establishment of Sanchez Taberno, and was killed by Pedro Romero as the third bull of that same afternoon. His ear was cut by popular acclamation and given to Pedro Romero, who, in turn, gave it to Brett, who wrapped it in a handkerchief belonging to myself, and left both ear and handkerchief, along with a number of Muratti cigarette stubs, shoved far back in the drawer of the bed-table that stood beside her bed in the Hotel Montoya, in Pamplona.

Back in the hotel, the night watchman was sitting on a bench inside the door. He had been there all night and was very sleepy. He stood up as I came in. Three of the waitresses came in at the same time. They had been to the morning show at the bullring. They went upstairs laughing. I followed them upstairs and went into my room. I took off my shoes and lay down on the bed. The window was open onto the balcony and the sunlight was bright in the room. I did not feel sleepy. It must have been half past three o'clock when I had gone to bed and the bands had waked me at six. My jaw was sore on both sides. I felt it with my thumb and fingers.

That damn Cohn. He should have hit somebody the first time he was insulted, and then gone away. He was so sure that Brett loved him. He was going to stay, and true love woulc1 conquer all. Someone knocked on the door.

"Come in."

It was Bill and Mike. They sat down on the bed.

"Some encierro," Bill said. "Some encierro."

"I say, weren't you there?" Mike asked. "Ring for some beer, Bill."

"What a morning!" Bill said. He mopped off his face. "My God! what a morning! And here's old Jake. Old Jake, the human punching bag."

"What happened inside?"

"Good God!" Bill said, "what happened, Mike?"

"There were these bulls coming in," Mike said. "Just ahead of them was the crowd, and some chap tripped and brought the whole lot of them down."

"And the bulls all came in right over them," Bill said. "I heard them yell."

"That was Edna," Bill said.

"Chaps kept coming out and waving their shirts."

"One bull went along the barrera and hooked everybody over."

"They took about twenty chaps to the infirmary," Mike said.

"What a morning!" Bill said. "The damn police kept arresting chaps that wanted to go and commit suicide with the bulls."

"The steers took them in, in the end," Mike said. "It took about an hour."

"It was really about a quarter of an hour," Mike objected.

"Oh, go to hell," Bill said. "You've been in the war. It was two hours and a half for me."

"Where's that beer?" Mike asked.

"What did you do with the lovely Edna?"

"We took her home just now. She's gone to bed."

“How did she like it?”

“Fine. We told her it was just like that every morning.”

“She was impressed,” Mike said.

“She wanted us to go down in the ring, too,” Bill said. “She likes action.”

“I said it wouldn’t be fair to my creditors,” Mike said.

“What a morning,” Bill said. “And what a night!”

“How’s your jaw, Jake?” Mike asked.

“Sore,” I said.

Bill laughed.

“Why didn’t you hit him with a chair?”

“You can talk,” Mike said. “He’d have knocked you out, too. I never saw him hit me. I rather think I saw him just before, and then quite suddenly I was sitting down in the street, and Jake was lying under a table.”

“Where did he go afterward?” I asked.

“Here she is,” Mike said. “Here’s the beautiful lady with the beer.”

The chambermaid put the tray with the beer-bottles and glasses down on the table.

“Now bring up three more bottles,” Mike said.

“Where did Cohn go after he hit me?” I asked Bill.

“Don’t you know about that?” Mike was opening a beer bottle. He poured the beer into one of the glasses, holding the glass close to the bottle.

“Really?” Bill asked.

“Why he went in and found Brett and the bullfighter chap in the bullfighter’s room, and then he massacred the poor, bloody bullfighter.”

“No.”

“Yes.”

“What a night!” Bill said.

“He nearly killed the poor, bloody bullfighter. Then Cohn

wanted to take Brett away. Wanted to make an honest woman of her, I imagine. Damned touching scene."

He took a long drink of the beer.

"He is an ass."

"What happened?"

"Brett gave him what for. She told him off. I think she was rather good."

"I'll bet she was," Bill said.

"Then Cohn broke down and cried, and wanted to shake hands with the bullfighter fellow. He wanted to shake hands with Brett, too."

"I know. He shook hands with me."

"Did he? Well, they weren't having any of it. The bullfighter fellow was rather good. He didn't say much, but he kept getting up and getting knocked down again. Cohn couldn't knock him out. It must have been damned funny."

"Where did you hear all this?"

"Brett. I saw her this morning."

"What happened finally?"

"It seems the bullfighter fellow was sitting on the bed. He'd been knocked down about fifteen times, and he wanted to fight some more. Brett held him and wouldn't let him get up. He was weak, but Brett couldn't hold him, and he got up. Then Cohn said he wouldn't hit him again. Said he couldn't do it. Said it would be wicked. So the bullfighter chap sort of rather staggered over to him. Cohn went back against the wall.

"'So you won't hit me?'

"'No,' said Cohn. 'I'd be ashamed to.'

"So the bullfighter fellow hit him just as hard as he could in the face, and then sat down on the floor. He couldn't get up, Brett said. Cohn wanted to pick him up and carry him to the bed. He said if Cohn helped him he'd kill him, and he'd kill him anyway this morning if Cohn wasn't out of town. Cohn was crying, and Brett

had told him off, and he wanted to shake hands. I've told you that before."

"Tell the rest," Bill said.

"It seems the bullfighter chap was sitting on the floor. He was waiting to get strength enough to get up and hit Cohn again. Brett wasn't having any shaking hands, and Cohn was crying and telling her how much he loved her, and she was telling him not to be a ruddy ass. Then Cohn leaned down to shake hands with the bullfighter fellow. No hard feelings, you know. All for forgiveness. And the bullfighter chap hit him in the face again. "

"That's quite a kid," Bill said.

"He ruined Cohn," Mike said. "You know I don't think Cohn will ever want to knock people about again."

"When did you see Brett?"

"This morning. She came in to get some things. She's looking after this Romero lad."

He poured out another bottle of beer.

"Brett's rather cut up. But she *loves* looking after people. That's how we came to go off together. She was looking after me."

"I know," I said.

"I'm rather drunk," Mike said. "I think I'll *stay* rather drunk. This is all awfully amusing, but it's not too pleasant. It's not too pleasant for me."

He drank off the beer.

"I gave Brett what for, you know. I said if she would go about with Jews and bullfighters and such people, she must expect trouble." He leaned forward. "I say, Jake, do you mind if I drink that bottle of yours? She'll bring you another one."

"Please," I said. "I wasn't drinking it, anyway."

Mike started to open the bottle. "Would you mind opening it?" I pressed up the wire fastener and poured it for him.

"You know," Mike went on, "Brett was rather good. She's always rather good. I gave her a fearful hiding about Jews and bullfighters,

and all those sort of people, and do you know what she said: 'Yes. I've had such a hell of a happy life with the British aristocracy!'"

He took a drink.

"That was rather good. Ashley, chap she got the title from, was a sailor, you know. Ninth baronet. When he came home he wouldn't sleep in a bed. Always made Brett sleep on the Boor. Finally, when he got really bad, he used to tell her he'd kill her. Always slept with a loaded service revolver. Brett used to take the shells out when he'd gone to sleep. She hasn't had an absolutely happy life. Brett. Damned shame, too. She enjoys things so."

He stood up. His hand was shaky.

"I'm going in the room. Try and get a little sleep." He smiled.

"We go too long without sleep in these fiestas. I'm going to start now and get plenty of sleep. Damn bad thing not to get sleep. Makes you frightfully nervy."

"We'll see you at noon at the Iruña," Bill said.

Mike went out the door. We heard him in the next room.

He rang the bell and the chambermaid came and knocked at the door.

"Bring up half a dozen bottles of beer and a bottle of Fundador," Mike told her.

"Si, Señorito."

"I'm going to bed," Bill said. "Poor old Mike. I had a hell of a row about him last night."

"Where? At that Milano place?"

"Yes. There was a fellow there that had helped pay Brett and Mike out of Cannes, once. He was damned nasty."

"I know the story."

"I didn't. Nobody ought to have a right to say things about Mike."

"That's what makes it bad."

"They oughtn't to have any right. I wish to hell they didn't have any right. I'm going to bed."

“Was anybody killed in the ring?”
“I don’t think so. Just badly hurt.”
“A man was killed outside in the runway.”
“Was there?” said Bill.

Chapter XVIII

At noon we were all at the café. It was crowded. We were eating shrimps and drinking beer. The town was crowded. Every street was full. Big motor cars from Biarritz and San Sebastian kept driving up and parking around the square. They brought people for the bullfight. Sightseeing cars came up, too. There was one with twenty-five Englishwomen in it. They sat in the big, white car and looked through their glasses at the fiesta. The dancers were all quite drunk. It was the last day of the fiesta.

The fiesta was solid and unbroken, but the motor cars and tourist cars made little islands of onlookers. When the cars emptied, the onlookers were absorbed into the crowd. You did not see them again except as sport clothes, odd-looking at a table among the closely packed peasants in black smocks. The fiesta absorbed even the Biarritz English so that you did not see them unless you passed close to a table. All the time there was music in the street. The drums kept on pounding and the pipes were going. Inside the cafés men with their hands gripping the table, or on each other's shoulders, were singing the hard-voiced singing.

"Here comes Brett," Bill said.

I looked and saw her coming through the crowd in the square, walking, her head up, as though the fiesta were being staged in her honor, and she found it pleasant and amusing.

"Hello, you chaps!" she said. "I say, I *have* a thirst."

"Get another big beer," Bill said to the waiter.

"Shrimps?"

“Is Cohn gone?” Brett asked.

“Yes,” Bill said. “He hired a car.”

The beer came. Brett started to lift the glass mug and her hand shook. She saw it and smiled, and leaned forward and took a long sip.

“Good beer.”

“Very good,” I said. I was nervous about Mike. I did not think he had slept. He must have been drinking all the time, but he seemed to be under control.

“I heard Cohn had hurt you, Jake,” Brett said.

“No. Knocked me out. That was all.”

“I say, he did hurt Pedro Romero,” Brett said. “He hurt him most badly.”

“How is he?”

“He’ll be all right. He won’t go out of the room.”

“Does he look badly?”

“Very. He was really hurt. I told him I wanted to pop out and see you chaps for a minute.”

“Is he going to fight?”

“Rather. I’m going with you, if you don’t mind.”

“How’s your boyfriend?” Mike asked. He had not listened to anything that Brett had said.

“Brett’s got a bullfighter,” he said. “She had a Jew named Cohn, but he turned out badly.”

Brett stood up.

“I am not going to listen to that sort of rot from you, Michael.”

“How’s your boyfriend?”

“Damned well,” Brett said. “Watch him this afternoon.”

“Brett’s got a bullfighter,” Mike said. “A beautiful, bloody bullfighter.”

“Would you mind walking over with me? I want to talk to you, Jake.”

“Tell him all about your bullfighter,” Mike said.”Oh, to hell with

your bullfighter!" He tipped the table so that all the beers and the dish of shrimps went over in a crash.

"Come on," Brett said. "Let's get out of this."

In the crowd crossing the square I said: "How is it?"

"I'm not going to see him after lunch until the fight. His people come in and dress him. They're very angry about me, he says."

Brett was radiant. She was happy. The sun was out and the day was bright.

"I feel altogether changed," Brett said. "You've no idea, Jake."

"Anything you want me to do?"

"No, just go to the fight with me."

"We'll see you at lunch?"

"No. I'm eating with him."

We were standing under the arcade at the door of the hotel. They were carrying tables out and setting them up under the arcade.

"Want to take a turn out to the park?" Brett asked. "I don't want to go up yet. I fancy he's sleeping."

We walked along past the theatre and out of the square and along through the barracks of the fair, moving with the crowd between the lines of booths. We came out on a cross-street that led to the Paseo de Sarasate. We could see the crowd walking there, all the fashionably dressed people. They were making the turn at the upper end of the park.

"Don't let's go there," Brett said. "I don't want staring at just now. "

We stood in the sunlight. It was hot and good after the rain and the clouds from the sea.

"I hope the wind goes down," Brett said. "It's very bad for him."

"So do I."

"He says the bulls are all right."

"They're good."

"Is that San Fermin's?"

Brett looked at the yellow wall of the chapel.

"Yes. Where the show started on Sunday."

"Let's go in. Do you mind? I'd rather like to pray a little for him or something."

We went in through the heavy leather door that moved very lightly. It was dark inside. Many people were praying. You saw them as your eyes adjusted themselves to the half-light. We knelt at one of the long wooden benches. After a little I felt Brett stiffen beside me, and saw she was looking straight ahead.

"Come on," she whispered throatily. "Let's get out of here. Makes me damned nervous."

Outside in the hot brightness of the street Brett looked up at the tree tops in the wind. The praying had not been much of a success.

"Don't know why I get so nervy in church," Brett said. "Never does me any good."

We walked along.

"I'm damned bad for a religious atmosphere," Brett said. "I've the wrong type of face.

"You know," Brett said, "I'm not worried about him at all. I just feel happy about him."

"Good."

"I wish the wind would drop, though."

"It's liable to go down by five o'clock."

"Let's hope."

"You might pray," I laughed.

"Never does me any good. I've never gotten anything I prayed for. Have you?"

"Oh, yes."

"Oh, rot," said Brett. "Maybe it works for some people, though You don't look very religious, Jake."

"I'm pretty religious."

"Oh, rot," said Brett. "Don't start proselyting today. To-day's going to be bad enough as it is."

It was the first time I had seen her in the old happy, careless way since before she went off with Cohn. We were back again in front of the hotel. All the tables were set now, and already several were filled with people eating.

"Do look after Mike," Brett said. "Don't let him get too bad."

"Your frients haff gone upstairs," the German maitre d'hôtel said in English. He was a continual eavesdropper. Brett turned to him:

"Thank you, so much. Have you anything else to say?"

"No, *ma'am."*

"Good," said Brett.

"Save us a table for three," I said to the German. He smiled his dirty little pink-and-white smile.

"Iss madam eating here?"

"No," Brett said.

"Den I think a tabul for two will be enuff."

"Don't talk to him," Brett said. "Mike must have been in bad shape," she said on the stairs. We passed Montoya on the stairs. He bowed and did not smile.

"I'll see you at the café," Brett said. "Thank you, so much, Jake."

We had stopped at the floor our rooms were on. She went straight down the hall and into Romero's room. She did not knock. She simply opened the door, went in, and closed it behind her.

I stood in front of the door of Mike's room and knocked. There was no answer. I tried the knob and it opened. Inside the room was in great disorder. All the bags were opened and clothing was strewn around. There were empty bottles beside the bed. Mike lay on the bed looking like a death mask of himself. He opened his eyes and looked at me.

"Hello, Jake," he said very slowly. "I'm getting a little sleep. I've wanted a little sleep for a long time."

"Let me cover you over."

"No. I'm quite warm."

"Don't go. I haven't gotten to sleep yet."

“You’ll sleep, Mike. Don’t worry, boy.”

“Brett’s got a bullfighter,” Mike said. “But her Jew has gone away.”

He turned his head and looked at me.

“Damned good thing, what?”

“Yes. Now go to sleep, Mike. You ought to get some sleep.”

“I’m just starting. I’m going to get a little sleep.”

He shut his eyes. I went out of the room and turned the door to quietly. Bill was in my room reading the paper.

“See Mike?”

“Yes.”

“Let’s go and eat.”

“I won’t eat downstairs with that German head waiter. He was damned snotty when I was getting Mike upstairs.”

“He was snotty to us, too.”

“Let’s go out and eat in the town.”

We went down the stairs. On the stairs we passed a girl coming up with a covered tray.

“There goes Brett’s lunch,” Bill said.

“And the kid’s,” I said.

Outside on the terrace under the arcade the German head waiter came up. His red cheeks were shiny. He was being polite.

“I haff a tabul for two for you gentlemen,” he said.

“Go sit at it,” Bill said. We went on out across the street.

We ate at a restaurant in a side street off the square. They were all men eating in the restaurant. It was full of smoke and drinking and singing. The food was good and so was the wine. We did not talk much. Afterward we went to the café and watched the fiesta come to the boiling-point. Brett came over soon after lunch. She said she had looked in the room and that Mike was asleep.

When the fiesta boiled over and toward the bullring we went with the crowd. Brett sat at the ringside between Bill and me. Directly below us was the callejon, the passageway between the

stands and the red fence of the barrera. Behind us the concrete stands filled solidly. Out in front, beyond the red fence, the sand of the ring was smooth-rolled and yellow. It looked a little heavy from the rain, but it was dry in the sun and firm and smooth. The sword-handlers and bullring servants came down the callejon carrying on their shoulders the wicker baskets of fighting capes and muletas. They were bloodstained and compactly folded and packed in the baskets. The sword-handlers opened the heavy leather sword-cases so the red wrapped hilts of the sheaf of swords showed as the leather case leaned against the fence. They unfolded the dark-stained red Harmel of the muletas and fixed batons in them to spread the stuff and give the matador something to hold. Brett watched it all. She was absorbed in the professional details.

"He's his name stencilled on all the capes and muletas," she said. "Why do they call them muletas?"

"I don't know."

"I wonder if they ever launder them."

"I don't think so. It might spoil the color."

"The blood must stiffen them," Bill said.

"Funny," Brett said. "How one doesn't mind the blood."

Below in the narrow passage of the callejon the sword-handlers arranged everything. All the seats were full. Above, all the boxes were full. There was not an empty seat except in the President's box. When he came in the fight would start. Across the smooth sand, in the high doorway that led into the corrals, the bullfighters were standing, their arms furled in their capes, talking, waiting for the signal to march in across the arena. Brett was watching them with the glasses.

"Here, would you like to look?"

I looked through the glasses and saw the three matadors. Romero was in the centre, Belmonte on his left, Marcial on his right. Back of them were their people, and behind the ban derilleros, back in the passageway and in the open space of the

corral, I saw the picadors. Romero was wearing a black suit. His tri-cornered hat was low down over his eyes. I could not see his face clearly under the hat, but it looked badly marked. He was looking straight ahead. Marcial was smoking a cigarette guardedly, holding it in his hand. Belmonte looked ahead, his face wan and yellow, his long wolf jaw out. He was looking at nothing. Neither he nor Romero seemed to have anything in common with the others. They were all alone. The President came in; there was handclapping above us in the grand stand, and I handed the glasses to Brett. There was applause. The music started. Brett looked through the glasses.

"Here, take them," she said.

Through the glasses I saw Belmonte speak to Romero. Marcial straightened up and dropped his cigarette, and, looking straight ahead, their heads back, their free arms swinging, the three matadors walked out. Behind them came all the procession, opening out, all striding in step, all the capes furled, everybody with free arms swinging, and behind rode the picadors, their pics rising like lances. Behind all came the two trains of mules and the bullring servants. The matadors bowed, holding their hats on, before the President's box, and then came over to the barrera below us. Pedro Romero took off his heavy gold-brocaded cape and handed it over the fence to his sword-handler. He said something to the sword-handler. Close below us we saw Romero's lips were puffed, both eyes were discolored. His face was discolored and swollen. The sword-handler took the cape, looked up at Brett, and came over to us and handed up the cape.

"Spread it out in front of you," I said.

Brett leaned forward. The cape was heavy and smoothly stiff with gold. The sword-handler looked back, shook his head, and said something. A man beside me leaned over toward Brett.

"He doesn't want you to spread it," he said. "You should fold it and keep it in your lap."

Brett folded the heavy cape.

Romero did not look up at us. He was speaking to Belmonte.

Belmonte had sent his formal cape over to some friends. He looked across at them and smiled, his wolf smile that was only with the mouth. Romero leaned over the barrera and asked for the water jug. The sword-handler brought it and Romero poured water over the percale of his fighting cape, and then scuffed the lower folds in the sand with his slippered foot.

"What's that for?" Brett asked.

"To give it weight in the wind."

"His face looks bad," Bill said.

"He feels very badly," Brett said. "He should be in bed."

The first bull was Belmonte's. Belmonte was very good. But because he got thirty thousand pesetas and people had stayed in line all night to buy tickets to see him, the crowd demanded that he should be more than very good. Belmonte's great attraction is working close to the bull. In bullfighting they speak of the terrain of the bull and the terrain of the bullfighter. As long as a bullfighter stays in his own terrain he is comparatively safe. Each time he enters into the terrain of the bull he is in great danger. Belmonte, in his best days, worked always in the terrain of the bull. This way he gave the sensation of coming tragedy. People went to the corrida to see Belmonte, to be given tragic sensations, and perhaps to see the death of Belmonte. Fifteen years ago they said if you wanted to see Belmonte you should go quickly, while he was still alive. Since then he has killed more than a thousand bulls. When he retired the legend grew up about how his bull- fighting had been, and when he came out of retirement the public were disappointed because no real man could work as close to the bulls as Belmonte was supposed to have done, not, of course, even Belmonte.

Also Belmonte imposed conditions and insisted that his bulls should not be too large, nor too dangerously armed with horns, and so the element that was necessary to give the sensation of tragedy

was not there, and the public, who wanted three times as much from Belmonte, who was sick with a fistula, as Belmonte had ever been able to give, felt defrauded and cheated, and Belmonte's jaw came further out in contempt, and his face turned yellower, and he moved with greater difficulty as his pain increased, and finally the crowd were actively against him, and he was utterly contemptuous and indifferent. He had meant to have a great afternoon, and instead it was an afternoon of sneers, shouted insults, and finally a volley of cushions and pieces of bread and vegetables, thrown down at him in the plaza where he had had his greatest triumphs. His jaw only went further out. Sometimes he turned to smile that toothed, long-jawed, lipless smile when he was called something particularly insulting, and always the pain that any movement produced grew stronger and stronger, until finally his yellow face was parchment color, and after his second bull was dead and the throwing of bread and cushions was over, after he had saluted the President with the same wolf-jawed smile and contemptuous eyes, and handed his sword over the barrera to be wiped, and put back in its case, he passed through into the callejon and leaned on the barrera below us, his head on his arms, not seeing, not hearing anything, only going through his pain. When he looked up, finally, he asked for a drink of water. He swallowed a little, rinsed his mouth, spat the water, took his cape, and went back into the ring.

Because they were against Belmonte the public were for Romero. From the moment he left the barrera and went toward the bull they applauded him. Belmonte watched Romero, too, watched him always without seeming to. He paid no attention to Marcial. Marcial was the sort of thing he knew all about. He had come out of retirement to compete with Marcial, knowing it was a competition gained in advance. He had expected to compete with Marcial and the other stars of the decadence of bullfighting, and he knew that the sincerity of his own bullfighting would be so set off by the false aesthetics of the bullfighters of the decadent period that he would

only have to be in the ring. His return from retirement had been spoiled by Romero. Romero did always, smoothly, calmly, and beautifully, what he, Belmonte, could only bring himself to do now sometimes. The crowd felt it, even the people from Biarritz, even the American ambassador saw it, finally. It was a competition that Belmonte would not enter because it would lead only to a bad horn wound or death. Belmonte was no longer well enough. He no longer had his greatest moments in the bullring. He was not sure that there were any great moments. Things were not the same and now life only came in flashes. He had flashes of the old greatness with his bulls, but they were not of value because he had discounted them in advance when he had picked the bulls out for their safety, getting out of a motor and leaning on a fence, looking over at the herd on the ranch of his friend the bull-breeder. So he had two small, manageable bulls without much horns, and when he felt the greatness again coming, just a little of it through the pain that was always with him, it had been discounted and sold in advance, and it did not give him a good feeling. It was the greatness, but it did not make bullfighting wonderful to him anymore.

Pedro Romero had the greatness. He loved bullfighting, and I think he loved the bulls, and I think he loved Brett. Everything of which he could control the locality he did in front of her all that afternoon. Never once did he look up. He made it stronger that way, and did it for himself, too, as well as for her. Because he did not look up to ask if it pleased he did it all for himself inside, and it strengthened him, and yet he did it for her, too. But he did not do it for her at any loss to himself. He gained by it all through the afternoon.

His first “quite” was directly below us. The three matadors take the bull in turn after each charge he makes at a picador. Belmonte was the first. Marcial was the second. Then came Romero. The three of them were standing at the left of the horse. The picador, his hat down over his eyes, the shaft of his pic angling sharply toward the

bull, kicked in the spurs and held them and with the reins in his left hand walked the horse forward toward the bull. The bull was watching. Seemingly he watched the white horse, but really he watched the triangular steel point of the pic. Romero, watching, saw the bull start to turn his head. He did not want to charge. Romero flicked his cape so the color caught the bull's eye. The bull charged with the reflex, charged, and found not the flash of color but a white horse, and a man leaned far over the horse, shot the steel point of the long hickory shaft into the hump of muscle on the bull's shoulder, and pulled his horse sideways as he pivoted on the pic, making a wound, enforcing the iron into the bull's shoulder, making him bleed for Belmonte.

The bull did not insist under the iron. He did not really want to get at the horse. He turned and the group broke apart and Romero was taking him out with his cape. He took him out softly and smoothly, and then stopped and, standing squarely in front of the bull, offered him the cape. The bull's tail went up and he charged, and Romero moved his arms ahead of the bull, wheeling, his feet firmed. The dampened, mud-weighted cape swung open and full as a sail fills, and Romero pivoted with it just ahead of the bull. At the end of the pass they were facing each other again. Romero smiled. The bull wanted it again, and Romero's cape filled again, this time on the other side. Each time he let the bull pass so close that the man and the bull and the cape that filled and pivoted ahead of the bull were all one sharply etched mass. It was all so slow and so controlled. It was as though he were rocking the bull to sleep. He made four veronicas like that, and finished with a half-veronica that turned his back on the bull and came away toward the applause, his hand on his hip, his cape on his arm, and the bull watching his back going away.

In his own bulls he was perfect. His first bull did not see well.

After the first two passes with the cape Romero knew exactly how bad the vision was impaired. He worked accordingly. It was

not brilliant bullfighting. It was only perfect bullfighting. The crowd wanted the bull changed. They made a great row. Nothing very fine could happen with a bull that could not see the lures, but the President would not order him replaced.

"Why don't they change him?" Brett asked.

"They've paid for him. They don't want to lose their money."

"It's hardly fair to Romero."

"Watch how he handles a bull that can't see the color."

"It's the sort of thing I don't like to see."

It was not nice to watch if you cared anything about the person who was doing it. With the bull who could not see the colors of the capes, or the scarlet flannel of the muleta, Romero had to make the bull consent with his body. He had to get so close that the bull saw his body, and would start for it, and then shift the bull's charge to the flannel and finish out the pass in the classic manner. The Biarritz crowd did not like it. They thought Romero was afraid, and that was why he gave that little sidestep each time as he transferred the bull's charge from his own body to the flannel. They preferred Belmonte's imitation of himself or Marcial's imitation of Belmonte. There were three of them in the row behind us.

"What's he afraid of the bull for? The bull's so dumb he only goes after the cloth."

"He's just a young bullfighter. He hasn't learned it yet."

"But I thought he was fine with the cape before."

"Probably he's nervous now."

Out in the centre of the ring, all alone, Romero was going on with the same thing, getting so close that the bull could see him plainly, offering the body, offering it again a little closer, the bull watching dully, then so close that the bull thought he had him, offering again and finally drawing the charge and then, just before the horns came, giving the bull the red cloth to follow with that little, almost imperceptible, jerk that so offended the critical judgment of the Biarritz bullfight experts.

“He’s going to kill now,” I said to Brett. “The bull’s still strong. He wouldn’t wear himself out.”

Out in the centre of the ring Romero profiled in front of the bull, drew the sword out from the folds of the muleta, rose on his toes, and sighted along the blade. The bull charged as Romero charged. Romero’s left hand dropped the muleta over the bull’s muzzle to blind him, his left shoulder went forward between the horns as the sword went in, and for just an instant he and the bull were one, Romero way out over the bull, the right arm extended high up to where the hilt of the sword had gone in between the bull’s shoulders. Then the figure was broken. There was a little jolt as Romero came clear, and then he was standing, on-e hand up, facing the bull, his shirt ripped out from under his sleeve, the white blowing in the wind, and the bull, the red sword hilt tight between his shoulders, his head going down and his legs settling.

“There he goes,” Bill said.

Romero was close enough so the bull could see him. His hand still up, he spoke to the bull. The bull gathered himself, then his head went forward and he went over slowly, then all over, suddenly, four feet in the air.

They handed the sword to Romero, and carrying it blade down, the muleta in his other hand, he walked over to in front of the President’s box, bowed, straightened, and came over to the barrera and handed over the sword and muleta.

“Bad one,” said the sword-handler.

“He made me sweat,” said Romero. He wiped off his face. The sword-handler handed him the water jug. Romero wiped his lips. It hurt him to drink out of the jug. He did not look up at us.

Marcial had a big day. They were still applauding him when Romero’s last bull came in. It was the bull that had sprinted out and killed the man in the morning running.

During Romero’s first bull his hurt face had been very noticeable. Everything he did showed it. All the concentration of

the awkwardly delicate working with the bull that could not see well brought it out. The fight with Cohn had not touched his spirit but his face had been smashed and his body hurt. He was wiping all that out now. Each thing that he did with this bull wiped that out a little cleaner. It was a good bull, a big bull, and with horns, and it turned and recharged easily and surely. He was what Romero wanted in bulls.

When he had finished his work with the muleta and was ready to kill, the crowd made him go on. They did not want the bull killed yet, they did not want it to be over. Romero went on. It was like a course in bullfighting. All the passes he linked up, all completed, all slow, templed and smooth. There were no tricks and no mystifications. There was no brusqueness. And each pass as it reached the summit gave you a sudden ache inside. The crowd did not want it ever to be finished.

The bull was squared on all four feet to be killed, and Romero killed directly below us. He killed not as he had been forced to by the last bull, but as he wanted to. He profiled directly in front of the bull, drew the sword out of the folds of the muleta and sighted along the blade. The bull watched him. Romero spoke to the bull and tapped one of his feet. The bull charged and Romero waited for the charge, the muleta held low, sighting along the blade, his feet firm. Then without taking a step forward, he became one with the bull, the sword was in high between the shoulders, the bull had followed the low-swung Hannel, that disappeared as Romero lurched clear to the left, and it was over. The bull tried to go forward, his legs commenced to settle, he swung from side to side, hesitated, then went down on his knees, and Romero's older brother leaned forward behind him and drove a short knife into the bull's neck at the base of the horns. The first time he missed. He drove the knife in again, and the bull went over, twitching and rigid. Romero's brother, holding the bull's horn in one hand, the knife in the other, looked up at the President's box. Handkerchiefs were

waving all over the bullring. The President looked down from the box and waved his handkerchief. The brother cut the notched black ear from the dead bull and trotted over with it to Romero. The bull lay heavy and black on the sand, his tongue out. Boys were running toward him from all parts of the arena, making a little circle around him. They were starting to dance around the bull.

Romero took the ear from his brother and held it up toward the President. The President bowed and Romero, running to get ahead of the crowd, came toward us. He leaned up against the barrera and gave the ear to Brett. He nodded his head and smiled. The crowd was all about him. Brett held down the cape.

"You liked it?" Romero called.

Brett did not say anything. They looked at each other and smiled. Brett had the ear in her hand.

"Don't get bloody," Romero said, and grinned. The crowd wanted him. Several boys shouted at Brett. The crowd was the boys, the dancers, and the drunks. Romero turned and tried to get through the crowd. They were all around him trying to lift him and put him on their shoulders. He fought and twisted away, and started running, in the midst of them, toward the exit. He did not want to be carried on people's shoulders. But they held him and lifted him. It was uncomfortable and his legs were spraddled and his body was very sore. They were lifting him and all running toward the gate. He had his hand on somebody's shoulder. He looked around at us apologetically. The crowd, running, went out the gate with him.

We all three went back to the hotel. Brett went upstairs. Bill and I sat in the downstairs dining room and ate some hard-boiled eggs and drank several bottles of beer. Belmonte came down in his street clothes with his manager and two other men. They sat at the next table and ate. Belmonte ate very little. They were leaving on the seven o'clock train for Barcelona. Belmonte wore a blue-striped shirt and a dark suit, and ate soft-boiled eggs. The others ate a big

meal. Belmonte did not talk. He only answered questions.

Bill was tired after the bullfight. So was I. We both took a bullfight very hard. We sat and ate the eggs and I watched Belmonte and the people at his table. The men with him were tough-looking and businesslike.

"Come on over to the café," Bill said. "I want an absinthe."

It was the last day of the fiesta. Outside it was beginning to be cloudy again. The square was full of people and the fireworks experts were making up their set pieces for the night and covering them over with beech branches. Boys were watching. We passed stands of rockets with long bamboo stems. Outside the café there was a great crowd. The music and the dancing were going on. The giants and the dwarfs were passing.

"Where's Edna?" I asked Bill.

"I don't know."

We watched the beginning of the evening of the last night of the fiesta. The absinthe made everything seem better. I drank it without sugar in the dripping glass, and it was pleasantly bitter.

"I feel sorry about Cohn," Bill said. "He had an awful time."

"Oh, to hell with Cohn," I said.

"Where do you suppose he went?"

"Up to Paris."

"What do you suppose he'll do?"

"Oh, to hell with him."

"What do you suppose he'll do?"

"Pick up with his old girl, probably."

"Who was his old girl?"

"Somebody named Frances."

We had another absinthe.

"When do you go back?" I asked.

"Tomorrow."

After a little while Bill said: "Well, it was a swell fiesta."

"Yes," I said; "something doing all the time."

“You wouldn’t believe it. It’s like a wonderful nightmare.”

“Sure,” I said. “I’d believe anything. Including nightmares.”

“What’s the matter? Feel low?”

“Low as hell.”

“Have another absinthe. Here, waiter! Another absinthe for this señor.”

“I feel like hell,” I said.

“Drink that,” said Bill. “Drink it slow.”

It was beginning to get dark. The fiesta was going on. I began to feel drunk but I did not feel any better.

“How do you feel?”

“I feel like hell.”

“Have another?”

“It won’t do any good.”

“Try it. You can’t tell; maybe this is the one that gets it. Hey, waiter! Another absinthe for this senor!”

I poured the water directly into it and stirred it instead of letting it drip. Bill put in a lump of ice. I stirred the ice around with a spoon in the brownish, cloudy mixture.

“How is it?”

“Fine.”

“Don’t drink it fast that way. It will make you sick.”

I set down the glass. I had not meant to drink it fast.

“I feel tight.”

“You ought to.”

“That’s what you wanted, wasn’t it?”

“Sure. Get tight. Get over your damn depression.”

“Well, I’m tight. Is that what you want?”

“Sit down.”

“I won’t sit down,” I said. “I’m going over to the hotel.”

I was very drunk. I was drunker than I ever remembered having been. At the hotel I went upstairs. Brett’s door was open. I put my head in the room. Mike was sitting on the bed. He waved a bottle.

“Jake,” he said. “Come in, Jake.”

I went in and sat down. The room was unstable unless I looked at some fixed point.

“Brett, you know. She’s gone off with the bullfighter chap.”

“No.”

“Yes. She looked for you to say good-bye. They went on the seven o’clock train.”

“Did they?”

“Bad thing to do,” Mike said. “She shouldn’t have done it.”

“No.”

“Have a drink? Wait while I ring for some beer.”

“I’m drunk,” I said. “I’m going in and lie down.”

“Are you blind? I was blind myself.”

“Yes,” I said, “I’m blind.”

“Well, bung-o,” Mike said. “Get some sleep, old Jake.”

I went out the door and into my own room and lay on the bed.

The bed went sailing off and I sat up in bed and looked at the wall to make it stop. Outside in the square the fiesta was going on. It did not mean anything. Later Bill and Mike came in to get me to go down and eat with them. I pretended to be asleep.

“He’s asleep. Better let him alone.”

“He’s blind as a tick,” Mike said. They went out.

I got up and went to the balcony and looked out at the dancing in the square. The world was not wheeling anymore. It was just very clear and bright, and inclined to blur at the edges. I washed, brushed my hair. I looked strange to myself in the glass, and went downstairs to the dining room.

“Here he is!” said Bill. “Good old Jake! I knew you wouldn’t pass out.”

“Hello, you old drunk,” Mike said.

“I got hungry and woke up.”

“Eat some soup,” Bill said.

The three of us sat at the table, and it seemed as though about

six people were missing.

BOOK III

Chapter XIX

In the morning it was all over. The fiesta was finished. I woke about nine o'clock, had a bath, dressed, and went downstairs. The square was empty and there were no people on the streets. A few children were picking up rocket-sticks in the square. The cafés were just opening and the waiters were carrying out the comfortable white wicker chairs and arranging them around the marble-topped tables in the shade of the arcade. They were sweeping the streets and sprinkling them with a hose.

I sat in one of the wicker chairs and leaned back comfortably.

The waiter was in no hurry to come. The white paper announcements of the unloading of the bulls and the big schedules of special trains were still up on the pillars of the arcade. A waiter wearing a blue apron came out with a bucket of water and a cloth, and commenced to tear down the notices, pulling the paper off in strips and washing and rubbing away the paper that stuck to the stone. The fiesta was over.

I drank a coffee and after a while Bill came over. I watched him come walking across the square. He sat down at the table and ordered a coffee.

"Well," he said, "it's all over."

"Yes," I said "When do you go?"

"I don't know. We better get a car, I think. Aren't you going back to Paris?"

"No. I can stay away another week. I think I'll go to San Sebastian."

“I want to get back.”

“What’s Mike going to do?”

“He’s going to Saint Jean de Luz.”

“Let’s get a car and all go as far as Bayonne. You can get the train up from there tonight.”

“Good. Let’s go after lunch.”

“All right. I’ll get the car.”

We had lunch and paid the bill. Montoya did not come near us. One of the maids brought the bill. The car was outside. The chauffeur piled and strapped the bags on top of the car and put them in beside him in the front seat and we got in. The car went out of the square, along through the side streets, out under the trees and down the hill and away from Pamplona. It did not seem like a very long ride. Mike had a bottle of Fundador. I only took a couple of drinks. We came over the mountains and out of Spain and down the white roads and through the over-foliaged, wet, green, Basque country, and finally into Bayonne. We left Bill’s baggage at the station, and he bought a ticket to Paris. His train left at seven-ten. We came out of the station. The car was standing out in front.

“What shall we do about the car?” Bill asked.

“Oh, bother the car,” Mike said. “Let’s just keep the car with us.”

“All right,” Bill said. “Where shall we go?”

“Let’s go to Biarritz and have a drink.”

“Old Mike the spender,” Bill said.

We drove in to Biarritz and left the car outside a very Ritz place. We went into the bar and sat on high stools and drank a whiskey and soda.

“That drink’s mine,” Mike said. “Let’s roll for it.”

So we rolled poker dice out of a deep leather dice-cup. Bill was out first roll. Mike lost to me and handed the bartender a hundred-franc note. The whiskeys were twelve francs apiece. We had another round and Mike lost again. Each time he gave the bartender a good tip. In a room off the bar there was a good jazz band playing.

It was a pleasant bar. We had another round. I went out on the first roll with four kings. Bill and Mike rolled. Mike won the first roll with four jacks. Bill won the second. On the final roll Mike had three kings and let them stay. He handed the dice-cup to Bill. Bill rattled them and rolled, and there were three kings, an ace, and a queen.

"It's yours, Mike," Bill said. "Old Mike, the gambler."

"I'm so sorry," Mike said. "I can't get it."

"What's the matter?"

"I've no money," Mike said. "I'm stony. I've just twenty francs. Here, take twenty francs."

Bill's face sort of changed.

"I just had enough to pay Montoya. Damned lucky to have it, too."

"I'll cash you a check," Bill said.

"That's damned nice of you, but you see I can't write checks."

"What are you going to do for money?"

"Oh, some will come through. I've two weeks allowance should be here. I can live on tick at this pub in Saint Jean."

"What do you want to do about the car?" Bill asked me. "Do you want to keep it on?"

"It doesn't make any difference. Seems sort of idiotic."

"Come on, let's have another drink," Mike said.

"Fine. This one is on me," Bill said. "Has Brett any money?"

He turned to Mike.

"I shouldn't think so. She put up most of what I gave to old Montoya."

"She hasn't any money with her?" I asked.

"I shouldn't think so. She never has any money. She gets five hundred quid a year and pays three hundred and fifty of it in interest to Jews."

"I suppose they get it at the source," said Bill.

"Quite. They're not really Jews. We just call them Jews. They're

Scotsmen, I believe."

"Hasn't she any at all with her?" I asked.

"I hardly think so. She gave it all to me when she left."

"Well," Bill said, "we might as well have another drink."

"Damned good idea," Mike said. "One never gets anywhere by discussing finances."

"No," said Bill. Bill and I rolled for the next two rounds. Bill lost and paid. We went out to the car.

"Anywhere you'd like to go, Mike?" Bill asked.

"Let's take a drive. It might do my credit good. Let's drive about a little."

"Fine. I'd like to see the coast. Let's drive down toward Hendaye."

"I haven't any credit along the coast."

"You can't ever tell," said Bill.

We drove out along the coast road. There was the green of the headlands, the white, red-roofed villas, patches of forest, and the ocean very blue with the tide out and the water curling far out along the beach. We drove through Saint Jean de Luz and passed through villages farther down the coast. Back of the rolling country we were going through we saw the mountains we had come over from Pamplona. The road went on ahead. Bill looked at his watch. It was time for us to go back. He knocked on the glass and told the driver to turn around. The driver backed the car out into the grass to turn it. In back of us were the woods, below a stretch of meadow, then the sea.

At the hotel where Mike was going to stay in Saint Jean we stopped the car and he got out. The chauffeur carried in his bags. Mike stood by the side of the car.

"Good-bye, you chaps," Mike said. "It was a damned fine fiesta."

"So long, Mike," Bill said.

"I'll see you around," I said.

"Don't worry about money," Mike said. "You can pay for the car,

Jake, and I'll send you my share."

"So long, Mike."

"So long, you chaps. You've been damned nice."

We all shook hands. We waved from the car to Mike. He stood in the road watching. We got to Bayonne just before the train left. A porter carried Bill's bags in from the consigne. I went as far as the inner gate to the tracks.

"So long, fella," Bill said.

"So long, kid!"

"It was swell. I've had a swell time."

"Will you be in Paris?"

"No, I have to sail on the 17th. So long, fella!"

"So long, old kid!"

He went in through the gate to the train. The porter went ahead with the bags. I watched the train pull out. Bill was at one of the windows. The window passed, the rest of the train passed, and the tracks were empty. I went outside to the car.

"How much do we owe you?" I asked the driver. The price to Bayonne had been fixed at a hundred and fifty pesetas.

"Two hundred pesetas."

"How much more will it be if you drive me to San Sebastian on your way back?"

"Fifty pesetas."

"Don't kid me."

"Thirty-five pesetas."

"It's not worth it," I said. "Drive me to the Hotel Panier Fleuri."

At the hotel I paid the driver and gave him a tip. The car was powdered with dust. I rubbed the rod-case through the dust. It seemed the last thing that connected me with Spain and the fiesta. The driver put the car in gear and went down the street. I watched it turn off to take the road to Spain. I went into the hotel and they gave me a room. It was the same room I had slept in when Bill and Cohn and I were in Bayonne. That seemed a very long time ago. I

washed, changed my shirt, and went out in the town.

At a newspaper kiosk I bought a copy of the *New York Herald* and sat in a café to read it. It felt strange to be in France again. There was a safe, suburban feeling. I wished I had gone up to Paris with Bill, except that Paris would have meant more fiesta-ing. I was through with fiestas for a while. It would be quiet in San Sebastian. The season does not open there until August. I could get a good hotel room and read and swim. There was a fine beach there. There were wonderful trees along the promenade above the beach, and there were many children sent down with their nurses before the season opened. In the evening there would be band concerts under the trees across from the Café Marinas. I could sit in the Marinas and listen.

"How does one eat inside?" I asked the waiter. Inside the café was a restaurant.

"Well. Very well. One eats very well."

"Good."

I went in and ate dinner. It was a big meal for France but It seemed very carefully apportioned after Spain. I drank a bottle of wine for company. It was a Chateau Margaux. It was pleasant to be drinking slowly and to be tasting the wine and to be drinking alone. A bottle of wine was good company. Afterward I had coffee. The waiter recommended a Basque liqueur called Izzarra. He brought in the bottle and poured a liqueur glass full. He said Izzarra was made of the flowers of the Pyrenees. The veritable flowers of the Pyrenees. It looked like hair-oil and smelled like Italian *strega.* I told him to take the flowers of the Pyrenees away and bring me a *vieux marc.* The *marc* was good. I had a second *marc* after the coffee.

The waiter seemed a little offended about the flowers of the Pyrenees, so I over-tipped him. That made him happy. It felt comfortable to be in a country where it is so simple to make people happy. You can never tell whether a Spanish waiter will thank you. Everything is on such a clear financial basis in France. It is the

simplest country to live in. No one makes things complicated by becoming your friend for any obscure reason. If you want people to like you you have only to spend a little money. I spent a little money and the waiter liked me. He appreciated my valuable qualities. He would be glad to see me back. I would dine there again sometime and he would be glad to see me, and would want me at his table. It would be a sincere liking because it would have a sound basis. I was back in France.

Next morning I tipped everyone a little too much at the hotel to make more friends, and left on the morning train for San Sebastian. At the station I did not tip the porter more than I should because I did not think I would ever see him again. I only wanted a few good French friends in Bayonne to make me welcome in case I should come back there again. I knew that if they remembered me their friendship would be loyal.

At Irun we had to change trains and show passports. I hated to leave France. Life was so simple in France. I felt I was a fool to be going back into Spain. In Spain you could not tell about anything. I felt like a fool to be going back into it, but I stood in line with my passport, opened my bags for the customs, bought a ticket, went through a gate, climbed onto the train, and after forty minutes and eight tunnels I was at San Sebastian.

Even on a hot day San Sebastian has a certain early-morning quality. The trees seem as though their leaves were never quite dry. The streets feel as though they had just been sprinkled. It is always cool and shady on certain streets on the hottest day. I went to a hotel in the town where I had stopped before, and they gave me a room with a balcony that opened out above the roofs of the town. There was a green mountainside beyond the roofs.

I unpacked my bags and stacked my books on the table beside the head of the bed, put out my shaving things, hung up some clothes in the big armoire, and made up a bundle for the laundry. Then I took a shower in the bathroom and went down to lunch.

Spain had not changed to summer time, so I was early. I set my watch again. I had recovered an hour by coming to San Sebastian.

As I went into the dining room the concierge brought me a police bulletin to fill out. I signed it and asked him for two telegraph forms, and wrote a message to the Hotel Montoya, telling them to forward all mail and telegrams for me to this address. I calculated how many days I would be in San Sebastian and then wrote out a wire to the office asking them to hold mail, but forward all wires for me to San Sebastian for six days. Then I went in and had lunch.

After lunch I went up to my room, read a while, and went to sleep. When I woke it was half past four. I found my swimming suit, wrapped it with a comb in a towel, and went downstairs and walked up the street to the Concha. The tide was about half-way out. The beach was smooth and firm, and the sand yellow. I went into a bathing cabin, undressed, put on my suit, and walked across the smooth sand to the sea. The sand was warm under bare feet. There were quite a few people in the water and on the beach. Out beyond where the headlands of the Concha almost met to form the harbor there was a white line of breakers and the open sea. Although the tide was going out, there were a few slow rollers. They came in like undulations in the water, gathered weight of water, and then broke smoothly on the warm sand. I waded out. The water was cold. As a roller came I dove, swam out under water, and came to the surface with all the chill gone. I swam out to the raft, pulled myself up, and lay on the hot planks. A boy and girl were at the other end. The girl had undone the top strap of her bathing suit and was browning her back. The boy lay face downward on the raft and talked to her. She laughed at things he said, and turned her brown back in the sun. I lay on the raft in the sun until I was dry. Then I tried several dives. I dove deep once, swimming down to the bottom. I swam with my eyes open and it was green and dark. The raft made a dark shadow. I came out of

water beside the raft, pulled up, dove once more, holding it for length, and then swam ashore. I lay on the beach until I was dry, then went into the bathing cabin, took off my suit, sloshed myself with fresh water, and rubbed dry.

I walked around the harbor under the trees to the casino, and then up one of the cool streets to the Café Marinas. There was an orchestra playing inside the café and I sat out on the terrace and enjoyed the fresh coolness in the hot day, and had a glass of lemon juice and shaved ice and then a long whiskey and soda. I sat in front of the Marinas for a long time and read and watched the people, and listened to the music.

Later when it began to get dark, I walked around the harbor and out along the promenade, and finally back to the hotel for supper. There was a bicycle race on, the Tour du Pays Basque, and the riders were stopping that night in San Sebastian. In the dining room, at one side, there was a long table of bicycle riders, eating with their trainers and managers. They were all French and Belgians, and paid close attention to their meal, but they were having a good time. At the head of the table were two good looking French girls, with much Rue du Faubourg Montmartre chic. I could not make out whom they belonged to. They all spoke in slang at the long table and there were many private jokes and some jokes at the far end that were not repeated when the girls asked to hear them. The next morning at five o'clock the race resumed with the last lap, San Sebastian-Bilbao, The bicycle riders drank much wine, and were burned and browned by the sun. They did not take the race seriously except among themselves. They had raced among themselves so often that it did not make much difference who won. Especially in a foreign country. The money could be arranged.

The man who had a matter of two minutes lead in the race had an attack of boils, which were very painful. He sat on the small of his back. His neck was very red and the blond hairs were sunburned. The other riders joked him about his boils. He tapped

on the table with his fork.

"Listen," he said, "tomorrow my nose is so tight on the handlebars that the only thing touches those boils is a lovely breeze."

One of the girls looked at him down the table, and he grinned and turned red. The Spaniards, they said, did not know how to pedal.

I had coffee out on the terrasse with the team manager of one of the big bicycle manufacturers. He said it had been a very pleasant race, and would have been worth watching if Bottechia had not abandoned it at Pamplona. The dust had been bad, but in Spain the roads were better than in France. Bicycle road racing was the only sport in the world, he said. Had I ever followed the Tour de France? Only in the papers. The Tour de France was the greatest sporting event in the world. Following and organizing the road races had made him know France. Few people know France. All spring and all summer and all fall he spent on the road with bicycle road racers. Look at the number of motor cars now that followed the riders from town to town in a road race. It was a rich country and more *sportif* every year. It would be the most *sportif* country in the world. It was bicycle road racing did it. That and football. He knew France. *La France Sportive.* He knew road racing. We had a cognac. After all, though, it wasn't bad to get back to Paris. There is only one Paname. In all the world, that is. Paris is the town the most *sportif* in the world. Did I know the *Chope de Negre?* Did I not. I would see him there some time. I certainly would. We would drink another *fine* together. We certainly would. They started at six o'clock less a quarter in the morning. Would I be up for the depart? I would certainly try to. Would I like him to call me? It was very interesting. I would leave a call at the desk. He would not mind calling me. I could not let him take the trouble. I would leave a call at the desk. We said good-bye until the next morning.

In the morning when I awoke the bicycle riders and their

following cars had been on the road for three hours. I had coffee and the papers in bed and then dressed and took my bathing suit down to the beach. Everything was fresh and cool and damp in the early morning. Nurses in uniform and in peasant costume walked under the trees with children. The Spanish children were beautiful. Some bootblacks sat together under a tree talking to a soldier. The soldier had only one arm. The tide was in and there was a good breeze and a surf on the beach.

I undressed in one of the bath cabins, crossed the narrow line of beach and went into the water. I swam out, trying to swim through the rollers, but having to dive sometimes. Then in the quiet water I turned and floated. Floating I saw only the sky, and felt the drop and lift of the swells. I swam back to the surf and coasted in, face down, on a big roller, then turned and swam, trying to keep in the trough and not have a wave break over me. It made me tired, swimming in the trough, and I turned and swam out to the raft. The water was buoyant and cold. It felt as though you could never sink. I swam slowly, it seemed like a long swim with the high tide, and then pulled up on the raft and sat, dripping, on the boards that were becoming hot in the sun. I looked around at the bay, the old town, the casino, the line of trees along the promenade, and the big hotels with their white porches and gold-lettered names. Off on the right, almost closing the harbor, was a green hill with a castle. The raft rocked with the motion of the water. On the other side of the narrow gap that led into the open sea was another high headland. I thought I would like to swim across the bay but I was afraid of cramp.

I sat in the sun and watched the bathers on the beach. They looked very small. After a while I stood up, gripped with my toes on the edge of the raft as it tipped with my weight, and dove cleanly and deeply, to come up through the lightening water, blew the salt water out of my head, and swam slowly and steadily in to shore.

After I was dressed and had paid for the bath cabin, I walked

back to the hotel. The bicycle racers had left several copies of *L'Auto* around, and I gathered them up in the reading room and took them out and sat in an easy chair in the sun to read about and catch up on French sporting life. While I was sitting there the concierge came out with a blue envelope in his hand.

"A telegram for you, sir."

I poked my finger along under the fold that was fastened down, spread it open, and read it. It had been forwarded from Paris:

COULD YOU COME HOTEL MONTANA MADRID
AM RATHER IN TROUBLE BRETT.

I tipped the concierge and read the message again. A postman was coming along the sidewalk. He turned in the hotel. He had a big moustache and looked very military. He came out of the hotel again. The concierge was just behind him.

"Here's another telegram for you, sir."

"Thank you," I said.

I opened it. It was forwarded from Pamplona.

COULD YOU COME HOTEL MONTANA MADRID
AM RATHER IN TROUBLE BRETT.

The concierge stood there waiting for another tip, probably.

"What time is there a train for Madrid?"

"It left at nine this morning. There is a slow train at eleven, and the Sud Express at ten tonight."

"Get me a berth on the Sud Express. Do you want the money now?"

"Just as you wish," he said. "I will have it put on the bill."

"Do that."

Well, that meant San Sebastian all shot to hell. I suppose, vaguely, I had expected something of the sort. I saw the concierge standing in the doorway.

"Bring me a telegram form, please."

He brought it and I took out my fountain-pen and printed:

LADY ASHLEY HOTEL MONTANA MADRID
ARRIVING SUO EXPRESS TOMORROW LOVE
JAKE.

That seemed to handle it. That was it. Send a girl off with one man. Introduce her to another to go off with him. Now go and bring her back. And sign the wire with love. That was it all right. I went in to lunch.

I did not sleep much that night on the Sud Express. In the morning I had breakfast in the dining car and watched the rock and pine country between Avila and Escorial. I saw the Escorial out of the window, gray and long and cold in the sun, and did not give a damn about it. I saw Madrid come up over the plain, a compact white skyline on the top of a little cliff away off across the sun-hardened country.

The Norte station in Madrid is the end of the line. All trains finish there. They don't go on anywhere. Outside were cabs and taxis and a line of hotel runners. It was like a country town. I took a taxi and we climbed up through the gardens, by the empty palace and the unfinished church on the edge of the cliff, and on up until we were in the high, hot, modern town. The taxi coasted down a smooth street to the Puerta del Sol, and then through the traffic and out into the Carrera San Jeronimo. All the shops had their awnings down against the heat. The windows on the sunny side of the street were shuttered. The taxi stopped at the curb. I saw the sign HOTEL MONTANA on the second Boor. The taxi driver carried the bags in and left them by the elevator. I could not make the elevator work, so I walked up. On the second Boor up was a cut brass sign: HOTEL MONTANA. I rang and no one came to the door. I rang again and a maid with a sullen face opened the door.

"Is Lady Ashley here?" I asked.

She looked at me dully.

“Is an Englishwoman here?”

She turned and called someone inside. A very fat woman came to the door. Her hair was gray and stiffly oiled in scallops around her face. She was short and commanding.

“Muy buenos,” I said. “Is there an Englishwoman here? I would like to see this English lady.”

“Muy buenos. Yes, there is a female English. Certainly you can see her if she wishes to see you.”

“She wishes to see me.”

“The chica will ask her.”

“It is very hot.”

“It is very hot in the summer in Madrid.”

“And how cold in winter.”

“Yes, it is very cold in winter.”

Did I want to stay myself in person in the Hotel Montana?

Of that as yet I was undecided, but it would give me pleasure if my bags were brought up from the ground floor in order that they might not be stolen. Nothing was ever stolen in the Hotel Montana. In other fondas, yes. Not here. No. The personages of this establishment were rigidly selectioned. I was happy to hear it. Nevertheless I would welcome the upbringal of my bags.

The maid came in and said that the female English wanted to see the male English now, at once.

“Good,” I said. “You see. It is as I said.”

“Clearly.”

I followed the maid’s back down a long, dark corridor. At the end she knocked on a door.

“Hello,” said Brett. “Is that you, Jake?”

“It’s me.”

“Come in. Come in.”

I opened the door. The maid closed it after me. Brett was in bed. She had just been brushing her hair and held the brush in her hand. The room was in that disorder produced only by those who have

always had servants.

"Darling!" Brett said.

I went over to the bed and put my arms around her. She kissed me, and while she kissed me I could feel she was thinking of something else. She was trembling in my arms. She felt very small.

"Darling! I've had such a hell of a time."

"Tell me about it."

"Nothing to tell. He only left yesterday. I made him go."

"Why didn't you keep him?"

"I don't know. It isn't the sort of thing one does. I don't think I hurt him any."

"You were probably damn good for him."

"He shouldn't be living with anyone. I realized that right away."

"No."

"Oh, hell!" she said, "let's not talk about it. Let's never talk about it."

"All right."

"It was rather a knock his being ashamed of me. He was ashamed of me for a while, you know."

"No."

"Oh, yes. They ragged him about me at the café, I guess. He wanted me to grow my hair out. Me, with long hair. I'd look so like hell."

"It's funny."

"He said it would make me more womanly. I'd look a fright."

"What happened?"

"Oh, he got over that. He wasn't ashamed of me long."

"What was it about being in trouble?"

"I didn't know whether I could make him go, and I didn't have a sou to go away and leave him. He tried to give me a lot of money, you know. I told him I had scads of it. He knew that was a lie. I couldn't take his money, you know."

"No."

“Oh, let’s not talk about it. There were some funny things, though. Do give me a cigarette.”

I lit the cigarette.

“He learned his English as a waiter in Gib.”

“Yes.”

“He wanted to marry me, finally.”

“Really?”

“Of course. I can’t even marry Mike.”

“Maybe he thought that would make him Lord Ashley.”

“No. It wasn’t that. He really wanted to marry me. So I couldn’t go away from him, he said. He wanted to make it sure I could never go away from him. After I’d gotten more womanly, of course.”

“You ought to feel set up.”

“I do. I’m all right again. He’s wiped out that damned Cohn.”

“Good.”

“You know I’d have lived with him if I hadn’t seen it was bad for him. We got along damned well.”

“Outside of your personal appearance.”

“Oh, he’d have gotten used to that.”

She put out the cigarette.

“I’m thirty-four, you know. I’m not going to be one of these bitches that ruins children.”

“No.”

“I’m not going to be that way. I feel rather good, you know. I feel rather set up.”

“Good.”

She looked away. I thought she was looking for another cigarette. Then I saw she was crying. I could feel her crying. Shaking and crying. She wouldn’t look up. I put my arms around her.

“Don’t let’s ever talk about it. Please don’t let’s ever talk about it.”

“Dear Brett.”

“I’m going back to Mike.” I could feel her crying as I held her close. “He’s so damned nice and he’s so awful. He’s my sort of thing.”

She would not look up. I stroked her hair. I could feel her shaking.

“I won’t be one of those bitches,” she said. “But, oh, Jake, please let’s never talk about it.”

We left the Hotel Montana. The woman who ran the hotel would not let me pay the bill. The bill had been paid.

“Oh, well. Let it go,” Brett said. “It doesn’t matter now.”

We rode in a taxi down to the Palace Hotel, left the bags, arranged for berths on the Sud Express for the night, and went into the bar of the hotel for a cocktail. We sat on high stools at the bar while the barman shook the Martinis in a large nickelled shaker.

“It’s funny what a wonderful gentility you get in the bar of a big hotel,” I said.

“Barmen and jockeys are the only people who are polite anymore.”

“No matter how vulgar a hotel is, the bar is always nice.”

“It’s odd.”

“Bartenders have always been fine.”

“You know,” Brett said, “it’s quite true. He is only nineteen. Isn’t it amazing?”

We touched the two glasses as they stood side by side on the bar. They were coldly beaded. Outside the curtained window was the summer heat of Madrid.

“I like an olive in a Martini,” I said to the barman.

“Right you are, sir. There you are.”

“Thanks.”

“I should have asked, you know.”

The barman went far enough up the bar so that he would not hear our conversation. Brett had sipped from the Martini as it stood, on the wood. Then she picked it up. Her hand was steady enough to

lift it after that first sip.

"It's good. Isn't it a nice bar?"

"They're all nice bars."

"You know I didn't believe it at first. He was born in 1905. I was in school in Paris, then. Think of that."

"Anything you want me to think about it?"

"Don't be an ass. *Would* you buy a lady a drink?"

"We'll have two more Martinis."

"As they were before, sir?"

"They were very good." Brett smiled at him.

"Thank you, ma'am."

"Well, bung-o," Brett said. "Bung-o!"

"You know," Brett said, "he'd only been with two women before. He never cared about anything but bullfighting."

"He's got plenty of time."

"I don't know. He thinks it was me. Not the show in general."

"Well, it was you."

"Yes. It was me."

"I thought you weren't going to ever talk about it."

"How can I help it?"

"You'll lose it if you talk about it."

"I just talk around it. You know I feel rather damned good, Jake."

"You should."

"You know it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch."

"Yes."

"It's sort of what we have instead of God."

"Some people have God," I said. "Quite a lot."

"He never worked very well with me."

"Should we have another Martini?"

The barman shook up two more Martinis and poured them out into fresh glasses.

“Where will we have lunch?” I asked Brett. The bar was cool.

You could feel the heat outside through the window.

“Here?” asked Brett.

“It’s rotten here in the hotel. Do you know a place called Botin’s?” I asked the barman.

“Yes, sir. Would you like to have me write out the address?”

“Thank you.”

We lunched upstairs at Botin’s. It is one of the best restaurants in the world. We had roast young suckling pig and drank *rioja alta.* Brett did not eat much. She never ate much. I ate a very big meal and drank three bottles of *rioja alta.*

“How do you feel, Jake?” Brett asked. “My God! what a meal you’ve eaten.”

“I feel fine. Do you want a dessert?”

“Lord, no.”

Brett was smoking.

“You like to eat, don’t you?” she said.

“Yes.” I said. “I like to do a lot of things.”

“What do you like to do?”

“Oh,” I said, “I like to do a lot of things. Don’t you want a dessert?”

“You asked me that once,” Brett said.

“Yes,” I said. “So I did. Let’s have another bottle of *rioja alta.”*

“It’s very good.”

“You haven’t drunk much of it,” I said.

“I have. You haven’t seen.”

“Let’s get two bottles,” I said. The bottles came. I poured a little in my glass, then a glass for Brett, then filled my glass. We touched glasses.

“Bung-o!” Brett said. I drank my glass and poured out another. Brett put her hand on my arm.

“Don’t get drunk, Jake,” she said. “You don’t have to.”

“How do you know?”

“Don’t,” she said. “You’ll be all right.”

“I’m not getting drunk,” I said. “I’m just drinking a little wine. I like to drink wine.”

“Don’t get drunk,” she said. “Jake, don’t get drunk.”

“Want to go for a ride?” I said. “Want to ride through the town?”

“Right,” Brett said. “I haven’t seen Madrid. I should see Madrid.”

“I’ll finish this,” I said.

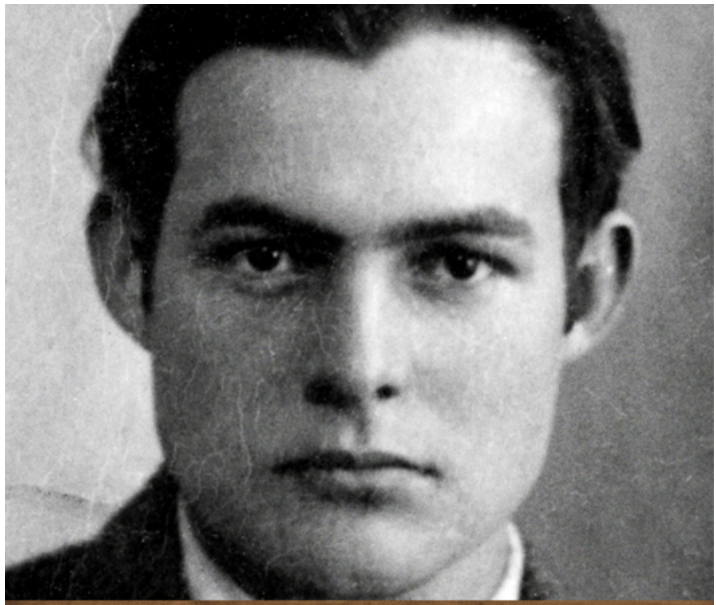
Downstairs we came out through the first floor dining room to the street. A waiter went for a taxi. It was hot and bright. Up the street was a little square with trees and grass where there were taxis parked. A taxi came up the street, the waiter h:mging out at the side. I tipped him and told the driver where to drive, and got in beside Brett. The driver started up the street. I settled back. Brett moved close to me. We sat close against each other. I put my arm around her and she rested against me comfortably. It was very hot and bright, and the houses looked sharply white. We turned out onto the Gran Via.

“Oh, Jake,” Brett said, “we could have had such a damned good time together.”

Ahead was a mounted policeman in khaki directing traffic. He raised his baton. The car slowed suddenly pressing Brett against me.

“Yes.” I said. “Isn’t it pretty to think so?”

THE END



ERNEST HEMINGWAY

A Farewell to Arms

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

A Farewell to Arms

Ernest Hemingway

Contents

Dedication

BOOK ONE

Chapter I
Chapter II
Chapter III
Chapter IV
Chapter V
Chapter VI
Chapter VII
Chapter VIII
Chapter IX
Chapter X
Chapter XI
Chapter XII

BOOK TWO

Chapter XIII
Chapter XIV
Chapter XV
Chapter XVI
Chapter XVII
Chapter XVIII
Chapter XIX
Chapter XX
Chapter XXI
Chapter XXII
Chapter XXIII
Chapter XXIV

BOOK THREE

Chapter XXV

Chapter XXVI
Chapter XXVII
Chapter XXVIII
Chapter XXIX
Chapter XXX
Chapter XXXI
Chapter XXXII

BOOK FOUR

Chapter XXXIII
Chapter XXXIV
Chapter XXXV
Chapter XXXVI
Chapter XXXVII

BOOK FIVE

Chapter XXXVIII
Chapter XXXIX
Chapter XL
Chapter XLI

Dedication

To G. A. Pfeiffer

BOOK ONE

Chapter I

In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and the dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves.

The plain was rich with crops; there were many orchards of fruit trees and beyond the plain the mountains were brown and bare. There was fighting in the mountains and at night we could see the flashes from the artillery. In the dark it was like summer lightning, but the nights were cool and there was not the feeling of a storm coming.

Sometimes in the dark we heard the troops marching under the window and guns going past pulled by motor-tractors. There was much traffic at night and many mules on the roads with boxes of ammunition on each side of their pack-saddles and gray motor trucks that carried men, and other trucks with loads covered with canvas that moved slower in the traffic. There were big guns too that passed in the day drawn by tractors, the long barrels of the guns covered with green branches and green leafy branches and vines laid over the tractors. To the north we could look across a valley and see a forest of chestnut trees and behind it another

mountain on this side of the river. There was fighting for that mountain too, but it was not successful, and in the fall when the rains came the leaves all fell from the chestnut trees and the branches were bare and the trunks black with rain. The vineyards were thin and bare-branched too and all the country wet and brown and dead with the autumn. There were mists over the river and clouds on the mountain and the trucks splashed mud on the road and the troops were muddy and wet in their capes; their rifles were wet and under their capes the two leather cartridge boxes on the front of the belts, gray leather boxes heavy with the packs of clips of thin, long 6.5 mm. cartridges, bulged forward under the capes so that the men, passing on the road, marched as though they were six months gone with child.

There were small gray motor cars that passed going very fast; usually there was an officer on the seat with the driver and more officers in the back seat. They splashed more mud than the camions even and if one of the officers in the back was very small and sitting between two generals, he himself so small that you could not see his face but only the top of his cap and his narrow back, and if the car went especially fast it was probably the King. He lived in Udine and came out in this way nearly every day to see how things were going, and things went very badly.

At the start of the winter came the permanent rain and with the rain came the cholera. But it was checked and in the end only seven thousand died of it in the army.

Chapter II

The next year there were many victories. The mountain that was beyond the valley and the hillside where the chestnut forest grew was captured and there were victories beyond the plain on the plateau to the south and we crossed the river in August and lived in a house in Gorizia that had a fountain and many thick shady trees in a walled garden and a wisteria vine purple on the side of the house. Now the fighting was in the next mountains beyond and was not a mile away. The town was very nice and our house was very fine. The river ran behind us and the town had been captured very handsomely but the mountains beyond it could not be taken and I was very glad the Austrians seemed to want to come back to the town some time, if the war should end, because they did not bombard it to destroy it but only a little in a military way. People lived on in it and there were hospitals and cafes and artillery up side streets and two bawdy houses, one for troops and one for officers, and with the end of the summer, the cool nights, the fighting in the mountains beyond the town, the shell-marked iron of the railway bridge, the smashed tunnel by the river where the fighting had been, the trees around the square and the long avenue of trees that led to the square; these with there being girls in the town, the King passing in his motor car, sometimes now seeing his face and little long necked body and gray beard like a goat's chin tuft; all these with the sudden interiors of houses that had lost a wall through shelling, with plaster and rubble in their gardens and sometimes in the street, and the whole thing going well on the Carso made the fall very different from the last fall when we had

been in the country. The war was changed too.

The forest of oak trees on the mountain beyond the town was gone. The forest had been green in the summer when we had come into the town but now there were the stumps and the broken trunks and the ground torn up, and one day at the end of the fall when I was out where the oak forest had been I saw a cloud coming over the mountain. It came very fast and the sun went a dull yellow and then everything was gray and the sky was covered and the cloud came on down the mountain and suddenly we were in it and it was snow. The snow slanted across the wind, the bare ground was covered, the stumps of trees projected, there was snow on the guns and there were paths in the snow going back to the latrines behind trenches.

Later, below in the town, I watched the snow falling, looking out of the window of the bawdy house, the house for officers, where I sat with a friend and two glasses drinking a bottle of Asti, and, looking out at the snow falling slowly and heavily, we knew it was all over for that year. Up the river the mountains had not been taken; none of the mountains beyond the river had been taken. That was all left for next year. My friend saw the priest from our mess going by in the street, walking carefully in the slush, and pounded on the window to attract his attention. The priest looked up. He saw us and smiled. My friend motioned for him to come in. The priest shook his head and went on. That night in the mess after the spaghetti course, which everyone ate very quickly and seriously, lifting the spaghetti on the fork until the loose strands hung clear then lowering it into the mouth, or else using a continuous lift and sucking into the mouth, helping ourselves to wine from the grass-covered gallon flask; it swung in a metal cradle and you pulled the neck of the flask down with the forefinger and the wine, clear red, tannic and lovely, poured out into the glass held with the same hand; after this course, the captain commenced picking on the priest.

The priest was young and blushed easily and wore a uniform like the rest of us but with a cross in dark red velvet above the left breast pocket of his gray tunic. The captain spoke pidgin Italian for my doubtful benefit, in order that I might understand perfectly, that nothing should be lost.

"Priest to-day with girls," the captain said looking at the priest and at me. The priest smiled and blushed and shook his head. This captain baited him often.

"Not true?" asked the captain. "To-day I see priest with girls."

"No," said the priest. The other officers were amused at the baiting.

"Priest not with girls," went on the captain. "Priest never with girls," he explained to me. He took my glass and filled it, looking at my eyes all the time, but not losing sight of the priest.

"Priest every night five against one." Everyone at the table laughed. "You understand? Priest every night five against one." He made a gesture and laughed loudly. The priest accepted it as a joke.

"The Pope wants the Austrians to win the war," the major said. "He loves Franz Joseph. That's where the money comes from. I am an atheist."

"Did you ever read the 'Black Pig'?" asked the lieutenant. "1 will get you a copy. It was that which shook my faith."

"It is a filthy and vile book," said the priest. "You do not really like it."

"It is very valuable," said the lieutenant. "It tells you about those priests. You will like it," he said to me. I smiled at the priest and he smiled back across the candle-light. "Don't you read it," he said.

"I will get it for you," said the lieutenant.

"All thinking men are atheists," the major said. "I do not believe in the Free Masons however."

"I believe in the Free Masons," the lieutenant said. "It is a noble organization." Someone came in and as the door opened I could *see* the snow falling.

“There will be no more offensive now that the snow has come,” I said.

“Certainly not,” said the major. “You should go on leave. You should go to Rome, Naples, Sicily—”

“He should visit Amalfi,” said the lieutenant. “I will write you cards to my family in Amalfi. They will love you like a son.”

“He should go to Palermo.”

“He ought to go to Capri.”

“I would like you to *see* Abruzzi and visit my family at Capracotta,” said the priest.

“Listen to him talk about the Abruzzi. There’s more snow there than here. He doesn’t want to *see* peasants. Let him go to centres of culture and civilization.”

“He should have fine girls. I will give you the addresses of places in Naples. Beautiful young girls—accompanied by their mothers. Ha! Ha! Ha!” The captain spread his hand open, the thumb up and fingers outspread as when you make shadow pictures. There was a shadow from his hand on the wall. He spoke again in pidgin Italian. “You go away like this,” he pointed to the thumb, “and come back like this,” he touched the little finger. Everyone laughed.

“Look,” said the captain. He spread the hand again. Again the candle-light made its shadows on the wall. He started with the upright thumb and named in their order the thumb and four fingers, “soto-tenente (the thumb), tenente (first finger), capitano (next finger), maggiore (next to the little finger), and tenente-colonello (the little finger). You go away soto-tenente! You come back soto-colonello!” They all laughed. The captain was having a great success with finger games. He looked at the priest and shouted, “Every night priest five against one!” They all laughed again.

“You must go on leave at once,” the major said.

“I would like to go with you and show you things,” the lieutenant said.

“When you come back bring a phonograph.”

“Bring good opera disks.”

“Bring Caruso.”

“Don’t bring Caruso. He bellows.”

“Don’t you wish you could bellow like him?”

“He bellows. I say he bellows!”

“I would like you to go to Abruzzi,” the priest said. The others were shouting. “There is good hunting. You would like the people and though it is cold it is clear and dry. You could stay with my family. My father is a famous hunter.”

“Come on,” said the captain. “We go whorehouse before it shuts.”

“Goodnight,” I said to the priest.

“Goodnight,” he said.

Chapter III

When I came back to the front we still lived in that town. There were manymore guns in the country around and the spring had come. The fields were green and there were small green shoots on the vines, the trees along the road had small leaves and a breeze came from the sea. I saw the town with the hill and the old castle above it in a cup in the hills with the mountains beyond, brown mountains with a little green on their slopes. In the town there were more guns, there were some new hospitals, you met British men and sometimes women, on the street, and a few more houses had been hit by shell fire. It was warm and like the spring and I walked down the alleyway of trees, warmed from the sun on the wall, and found we still lived in the same house and that it all looked the same as when I had left it. The door was open, there was a soldier sitting on a bench outside in the sun, an ambulance was waiting by the side door and inside the door, as I went in, there was the smell of marble floors and hospital. It was all as I had left it except that now it Was spring. I looked in the door of the big room and saw the major sitting at his desk, the window open and the sunlight coming into the room. He did not see me and I did not know whether to go in and report or go upstairs first and clean up. I decided to go on upstairs.

The room I shared with the lieutenant Rinaldi looked out on the courtyard. The window was open, my bed was made up with blankets and my things hung on the wall, the gas mask in an oblong tin can, the steel helmet on the same peg. At the foot of the bed was my flat trunk, and my winter boots, the leather shiny with oil, were

on the trunk. My Austrian sniper's rifle with its blued octagon barrel and the lovely dark walnut, cheek-fitted, *schutzen* stock, hung over the two beds. The telescope that fitted it was, I remembered, locked in the trunk. The lieutenant, Rinaldi, lay asleep on the other bed. He woke when he heard me in the room and sat up.

"Ciaou!" he said. "What kind of time did you have?"

"Magnificent."

We shook hands and he put his arm around my neck and kissed me.

"Oughf," I said.

"You're dirty," he said. "You ought to wash. Where did you go and what did you do? Tell me everything at once."

"I went everywhere. Milan, Florence, Rome, Naples, Villa San Giovanni, Messina, Taormina—"

"You talk like a time-table. Did you have any beautiful adventures?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Milano, Firenze, Roma, Napoli—"

"That's enough. Tell me really what was the best."

"In Milano."

"That was because it was first. Where did you meet her? In the Cova? Where did you go? How did you feel? Tell me everything at once. Did you stay all night?"

"Yes."

"That's nothing. Here now we have beautiful girls. New girls never been to the front before."

"Wonderful."

"You don't believe me? We will go now this afternoon and see. And in the town we have beautiful English girls. I am now in love with Miss Barkley. I will take you to call. I will probably marry Miss Barkley."

"I have to get washed and report. Doesn't anybody work now?"

“Since you are gone we have nothing but frostbites, chilblains, jaundice, gonorrhea, self-inflicted wounds, pneumonia and hard and soft chancres. Every week someone gets wounded by rock fragments. There are a few real wounded. Next week the war starts again. Perhaps it start again. They say so. Do you think I would do right to marry Miss Barkley-after the war of course?”

“Absolutely,” I said and poured the basin full of water.

“Tonight you will tell me everything,” said Rinaldi. “Now I must go back to sleep to be fresh and beautiful for Miss Barkley.”

I took off my tunic and shirt and washed in the cold water in the basin. While I rubbed myself with a towel I looked around the room and out the window and at Rinaldi lying with his eyes closed on the bed. He was good-looking, was my age, and he came from Amalfi. He loved being a surgeon and we were great friends. While I was looking at him he opened his eyes.

“Have you any money?”

“Yes.”

“Loan me fifty lire.”

I dried my hands and took out my pocketbook from the inside of my tunic hanging on the wall. Rinaldi took the note, folded it without rising from the bed and slid it in his breeches pocket. He smiled, “I must make on Miss Barkley the impression of a man of sufficient wealth. You are my great and good friend and financial protector.”

“Go to hell,” I said.

That night at the mess I sat next to the priest and he was disappointed and suddenly hurt that I had not gone to the Abruzzi. He had written to his father that I was coming and they had made preparations. I myself felt as badly as he did and could not understand why I had not gone. It was what I had wanted to do and I tried to explain how one thing had led to another and finally he saw it and understood that I had really wanted to go and it was almost all right. I had drunk much wine and afterward coffee and

Strega and I explained, winefully, how we did not do the things we wanted to do; we never did such things.

We two were talking while the others argued. I had wanted to go to Abruzzi. I had gone to no place where the roads were frozen and hard as iron, where it was clear cold and dry and the snow was dry and powdery and hare-tracks in the snow and the peasants took off their hats and called you Lord and there was good hunting. I had gone to no such place but to the smoke of cafes and nights when the room whirled and you needed to look at the wall to make it stop, nights in bed, drunk, when you knew that that was all there was, and the strange excitement of waking and not knowing who it was with you, and the world all unreal in the dark so exciting that you must resume again unknowing and not caring in the night, sure that this was all and all and all and not caring. Suddenly to care very much and to sleep to wake with it sometimes morning and all that had been there gone and everything sharp and hard and clear and sometimes a dispute about the cost. Sometimes still pleasant and fond and warm and breakfast and lunch. Sometimes all niceness gone and glad to get out on the street but always another day starting and then another night. I tried to tell about the night and the difference between the night and the day and how the night was better unless the day was very clean and cold and I could not tell it; as I cannot tell it now. But if you have had it you know. He had not had it but he understood that I had really wanted to go to the Abruzzi but had not gone and we were still friends, with many tastes alike, but with the difference between us. He had always known what I did not know and what, when I learned it, I was always able to forget. But I did not now that then, although I learned it later. In the meantime we were all at the mess, the meal was finished, and the argument went on. We two stopped talking and the captain shouted, “Priest not happy. Priest not happy without girls.”

“I am happy,” said the priest.

“Priest not happy. Priest wants Austrians to win the war,” the captain said. The others listened. The priest shook his head.

“No,” he said.

“Priest wants us never to attack. Don’t you want us never to attack?”

“No. If there is a war I suppose we must attack.”

“Must attack. Shall attack!”

The priest nodded.

“Leave him alone,” the major said. “He’s all right.”

“He can’t do anything about it anyway,” the captain said. We all got up and left the table.

Chapter IV

The battery in the next garden woke me in the morning and I saw the sun coming through the window and got out of the bed. I went to the window and looked out. The gravel paths were moist and the grass was wet with dew. The battery fired twice and the air came each time like a blow and shook the window and made the front of my pajamas flap. I could not see the guns but they were evidently firing directly over us. It was a nuisance to have them there but it was a comfort that they were no bigger. As I looked out at the garden I heard a motor truck starting on the road. I dressed, went downstairs, had some coffee in the kitchen and went out to the garage.

Ten cars were lined up side by side under the long shed. They were top-heavy, blunt-nosed ambulances, painted gray and built like moving-vans. The mechanics were working on one out in the yard. Three others were up in the mountains at dressing stations.

"Do they ever shell that battery?" I asked one of the mechanics.

"No, Signor Tenente. It is protected by the little hill."

"How's everything?"

"Not so bad. This machine is no good but the others march." He stopped working and smiled. "Were you on permission?"

''Yes."

He wiped his hands on his jumper and grinned. "You have a good time?" The others all grinned too.

"Fine," I said. "What's the matter with this machine?"

"It's no good. One thing after another."

"What's the matter now?"

"New rings."

I left them working, the car looking disgraced and empty with the engine open and parts spread on the work bench, and went in under the shed and looked at each of the cars. They were moderately clean, a few freshly washed, the others dusty. I looked at the tires carefully, looking for cuts or stone bruises. Everything seemed in good condition. It evidently made no difference whether I was there to look after things or not. I had imagined that the condition of the cars, whether or not things were obtainable, the smooth functioning of the business of removing wounded and sick from the dressing stations, hauling them back from the mountains to the clearing station and then distributing them to the hospitals named on their papers, depended to a considerable extent on myself. Evidently it did not matter whether I was there or not.

"Has there been any trouble getting parts?" I asked the sergeant mechanic.

"No, Signor Tenente."

"Where is the gasoline park now?"

"At the same place."

"Good," I said and went back to the house and drank another bowl of coffee at the mess table. The coffee was a pale gray and sweet with condensed milk. Outside the window it was a lovely spring morning. There was that beginning of a feeling of dryness in the nose that meant the day would be hot later on. That day I visited the posts in the mountains and was back in town late in the afternoon.

The whole thing seemed to run better while I was away. The offensive was going to start again I heard. The division for which we worked were to attack at a place up the river and the major told me that I would see about the posts for during the attack. The attack would cross the river up above the narrow gorge and spread up the hillside. The posts for the cars would have to be as near the river as they could get and keep covered. They would, of course, be

selected by the infantry but we were supposed to work it out. It was one of those things that gave you a false feeling of soldiering.

I was very dusty and dirty and went up to my room to wash. Rinaldi was sitting on the bed with a copy of Hugo's English grammar. He was dressed, wore his black boots, and his hair shone.

"Splendid," he said when he saw me. "You will come with me to see Miss Barkley."

"No."

"Yes. You will please come and make me a good impression on her."

"All right. Wait till I get cleaned up."

"Wash up and come as you are."

I washed, brushed my hair and we started.

"Wait a minute," Rinaldi said. "Perhaps we should have a drink." He opened his trunk and took out a bottle.

"Not Strega," I said.

"No. Grappa."

"All right."

He poured two glasses and we touched them, first fingers extended. The grappa was very strong.

"Another?"

"All right," I said. We drank the second grappa, Rinaldi put away the bottle and we went down the stairs. It was hot walking through the town but the sun was starting to go down and it was very pleasant. The British hospital was a big villa built by Germans before the war. Miss Barkley was in the garden. Another nurse was with her. We saw their white uniforms through the trees and walked toward them. Rinaldi saluted. I saluted too but more moderately.

"How do you do?" Miss Barkley said. "You're not an Italian, are you?"

"Oh, no."

Rinaldi was talking with the other nurse. They were laughing.

"What an odd thing-to be in the Italian army."

"It's not really the army. It's only the ambulance."

"It's very odd though. Why did you do it?"

"I don't know," I said. "There isn't always an explanation for everything."

"Oh, isn't there? I was brought up to think there was."

"That's awfully nice."

"Do we have to go on and talk this way?"

"No," I said.

"That's a relief. Isn't it?"

"What is the stick?" I asked. Miss Barkley was quite tall. She wore what seemed to me to be a nurse's uniform, was blonde and had a tawny skin and gray eyes. I thought she was very beautiful. She was carrying a thin rattan stick like a toy riding-crop, bound in leather.

"It belonged to a boy who was killed last year."

"I'm awfully sorry."

"He was a very nice boy. He was going to marry me and he was killed in the Somme."

"It was a ghastly show."

"Were you there?"

"No."

"I've heard about it," she said. "There's not really any war of that sort down here. They sent me the little stick. His mother sent it to me. They returned it with his things."

"Had you been engaged long?"

"Eight years. We grew up together."

"And why didn't you marry?"

"I don't know," she said. "I was a fool not to. I could have given him that anyway. But I thought it would be bad for him."

"I see."

"Have you ever loved anyone?"

"No," I said.

We sat down on a bench and I looked at her.

"You have beautiful hair," I said.

"Do you like it?"

"Very much."

"I was going to cut it all off when he died."

"No."

"I wanted to do something for him. You see I didn't care about the other thing and he could have had it all. He could have had anything he wanted if I would have known. I would have married him or anything. I know all about it now. But then he wanted to go to war and I didn't know."

I did not say anything.

"I didn't know about anything then. I thought it would be worse for him. I thought perhaps he couldn't stand it and then of course he was killed and that was the end of it."

"I don't know."

"Oh, yes," she said. "That's the end of it."

We looked at Rinaldi talking with the other nurse.

"What is her name?"

"Ferguson. Helen Ferguson. Your friend is a doctor, isn't he?"

"Yes. He's very good."

"That's splendid. You rarely find anyone any good this close to the front. This is close to the front, isn't it?"

"Quite."

"It's a silly front," she said. "But it's very beautiful. Are they going to have an offensive?"

"Yes."

"Then we'll have to work. There's no work now."

"Have you done nursing long?"

"Since the end of 'fifteen. I started when he did. I remember having a silly idea he might come to the hospital where I was. With a sabre cut, I suppose, and a bandage around his head. Or shot through the shoulder. Something picturesque."

“This is the picturesque front,” I said.

“Yes,” she said. “People can’t realize what France is like. If they did, it couldn’t all go on. He didn’t have a sabre cut. They blew him all to bits.”

I didn’t say anything.

“Do you suppose it will always go on?”

“No.”

“What’s to stop it?”

“It will crack somewhere.”

“We’ll crack. We’ll crack in France. They can’t go on doing things like the Somme and not crack.”

“They won’t crack here,” I said.

“You think not?”

“No. They did very well last summer.”

“They may crack,” she said. “Anybody may crack.”

“The Germans too.”

“No,” she said. “I think not.”

We went over toward Rinaldi and Miss Ferguson.

“You love Italy?” Rinaldi asked Miss Ferguson in English.

“Quite well.”

“No understand,” Rinaldi shook his head.

“Abbastanza bene,” I translated. He shook his head.

“That is not good. You love England?”

“Not too well, I’m Scotch, you see.”

Rinaldi looked at me blankly.

“She’s Scotch, so she loves Scotland better than England,” I said in Italian.

“But Scotland is England.”

I translated this for Miss Ferguson.

“Pas encore,” said Miss Ferguson.

“Not really?”

“Never. We do not like the English.”

“Not like the English? Not like Miss Barkley?”

“Oh, that’s different. You mustn’t take everything so literally.”

After a while we said goodnight and left. Walking home Rinaldi said, “Miss Barkley prefers you to me. That is very clear. But the little Scotch one is very nice.”

“Very,” I said. I had not noticed her. “You like her?”

“No,” said Rinaldi.

Chapter V

The next afternoon I went to call on Miss Barkley again. She was not in the garden and I went to the side door of the villa where the ambulances drove up. Inside I saw the head nurse, who said Miss Barkley was on duty—"there's a war on, you know."

I said I knew.

"You're the American in the Italian army?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am."

"How did you happen to do that? Why didn't you join up with us?"

"I don't know," I said. "Could I join now?"

"I'm afraid not now. Tell me. Why did you join up with the Italians?"

"I was in Italy," I said, "and I spoke Italian."

"Oh," she said. "I'm learning it. It's beautiful language."

"Somebody said you should be able to learn it in two weeks."

"Oh, I'll not learn it in two weeks. I've studied it for months now. You may come and see her after seven o'clock if you wish. She'll be off then. But don't bring a lot of Italians."

"Not even for the beautiful language?"

"No. Nor for the beautiful uniforms."

"Good evening," I said.

"A rivederci, Tenente."

"A rivederla." I saluted and went out. It was impossible to salute foreigners as an Italian, without embarrassment. The Italian salute never seemed made for export.

The day had been hot. I had been up the river to the bridgehead

at Plava. It was there that the offensive was to begin. It had been impossible to advance on the far side the year before because there was only one road leading down from the pass to the pontoon bridge and it was under machine gun and shell fire for nearly a mile. It was not wide enough either to carry all the transport for an offensive and the Austrians could make a shambles out of it. But the Italians had crossed and spread out a little way on the far side to hold about a mile and a half on the Austrian side of the river. It was a nasty place and the Austrians should not have let them hold it. I suppose it was mutual tolerance because the Austrians still kept a bridgehead further down the river. The Austrian trenches were above on the hillside only a few yards from the Italian lines. There had been a little town but it was all rubble. There was what was left of a railway station and a smashed permanent bridge that could not be repaired and used because it was in plain sight.

I went along the narrow road down toward the river, left the car at the dressing station under the hill, crossed the pontoon bridge, which was protected by a shoulder of the mountain, and went through the trenches in the smashed-down town and along the edge of the slope. Everybody was in the dugouts. There were racks of rockets standing to be touched off to call for help from the artillery or to signal with if the telephone wires were cut. It was quiet, hot and dirty. I looked across the wire at the Austrian lines. Nobody was in sight. I had a drink with a captain that I knew in one of the dugouts and went back across the bridge. A new wide road was being finished that would go over the mountain and zigzag down to the bridge. When this road was finished the offensive would start. It came down through the forest in sharp turns. The system was to bring everything down the new road and take the empty trucks, carts and loaded ambulances and all returning traffic up the old narrow road. The dressing station was on the Austrian side of the river under the edge of the hill and stretcher-bearers would bring the wounded back across the pontoon bridge. It would be the same

when the offensive started. As far as I could make out the last mile or so of the new road where it started to level out would be able to be shelled steadily by the Austrians. It looked as though it might be a mess. But I found a place where the cars would be sheltered after they passed that last bad-looking bit and could wait for the wounded to be brought across the pontoon bridge. I would have liked to drive over the new road but it was not yet finished. It looked wide and well made with a good grade and the turns looked very impressive where you could see them through openings in the forest on the mountain side. The cars would be all right with their good metal-to-metal brakes and anyway, coming down, they would not be loaded. I drove back up the narrow road.

Two carabinieri held the car up. A shell had fallen and while we waited three others fell up the road. They were seventy-sevens and came with a whishing rush of air, a hard bright burst and flash and then gray smoke that blew across the road. The carabinieri waved us to go on. Passing where the shells had landed I avoided the small broken places and smelled the high explosive and the smell of blasted clay and stone and freshly shattered flint. I drove back to Gorizia and our villa and, as I said, went to call on Miss Barkley, who was on duty.

At dinner I ate very quickly and left for the villa where the British had their hospital. It was really very large and beautiful and there were fine trees in the grounds. Miss Barkley was sitting on a bench in the garden. Miss Ferguson was with her. They seemed glad to see me and in a little while Miss Ferguson excused herself and went away.

“I’ll leave you two,” she said. “You get along very well without me. “

“Don’t go, Helen,” Miss Barkley said.

“I’d really rather. I must write some letters.”

“Goodnight,” I said.

“Goodnight, Mr. Henry.”

“Don’t write anything that will bother the censor.”

“Don’t worry. I only write about what a beautiful place we live in and how brave the Italians are.”

“That way you’ll be decorated.”

“That will be nice. Goodnight, Catherine.”

“I’ll see you in a little while,” Miss Barkley said. Miss Ferguson walked away in the dark.

“She’s nice,” I said.

“Oh, yes, she’s very nice. She’s a nurse.”

“Aren’t you a nurse?”

“Oh, no. I’m something called a V.A. D. We work very hard but no one trusts us.”

“Why not?”

“They don’t trust us when there’s nothing going on. When there is really work they trust us.”

“What is the difference?”

“A nurse is like a doctor. It takes a long time to be. A V.A. D. is a short cut.”

“I see.”

“The Italians didn’t want women so near the front. So we’re all on very special behavior. We don’t go out.”

“I can come here though.”

“Oh, yes. We’re not cloistered.”

“Let’s drop the war.”

“It’s very hard. There’s no place to drop it.”

“Let’s drop it anyway.”

“All right.”

We looked at each other in the dark. I thought she was very beautiful and I took her hand. She let me take it and I held it and put my arm around under her arm.

“No,” she said. I kept my arm where it was.

“Why not?”

“No.”

“Yes,” I said. “Please.” I leaned forward in the dark to kiss her and there was a sharp stinging flash. She had slapped my face hard. Her hand had hit my nose and eyes, and tears came in my eyes from the reflex.

“I’m so sorry,” she said. I felt I had a certain advantage.

“You were quite right.”

“I’m dreadfully sorry,” she said. “I just couldn’t stand the nurse’s-evening- off aspect of it. I didn’t mean to hurt you. I did hurt you, didn’t I?”

She was looking at me in the dark. I was angry and yet certain, seeing it all ahead like the moves in a chess game.

“You did exactly right,” I said. “I don’t mind at all.”

“Poor man.”

“You see I’ve been leading a sort of a funny life. And I never even talk English. And then you are so very beautiful.” I looked at her.

“You don’t need to say a lot of nonsense. I said I was sorry. We do get along.”

“Yes,” I said. “And we have gotten away from the war.”

She laughed. It was the first time I had ever heard her laugh. I watched her face.

“You are sweet,” she said.

“No, I’m not.”

“Yes. You are a dear. I’d be glad to kiss you if you don’t mind.”

I looked in her eyes and put my arm around her as I had before and kissed her. I kissed her hard and held her tight and tried to open her lips; they were closed tight. I was still angry and as I held her suddenly she shivered. I held her close against me and could feel her heart beating and her lips opened and her head went back against my hand and then she was crying on my shoulder.

“Oh, darling,” she said. “You will be good to me, won’t you?”

What the hell, I thought. I stroked her hair and patted her shoulder. She was crying.

“You will, won’t you?” She looked up at me. “Because we’re going to have a strange life.”

After a while I walked with her to the door of the villa and she went in and I walked home. Back at the villa I went upstairs to the room. Rinaldi was lying on his bed. He looked at me.

“So you make progress with Miss Barkley?”

“We are friends.”

“You have that pleasant air of a dog in heat.”

I did not understand the word.

“Of a what?”

He explained.

“You,” I said, “have that pleasant air of a dog who—”

“Stop it,” he said. “In a little while we would say insulting things.” He laughed.

“Goodnight,” I said.

“Goodnight, little puppy.”

I knocked over his candle with the pillow and got into bed in the dark.

Rinaldi picked up the candle, lit it and went on reading.

Chapter VI

I was away for two days at the posts. When I got home it was too late and I did not see Miss Barkley until the next evening. She was not in the garden and I had to wait in the office of the hospital until she came down. There were many marble busts on painted wooden pillars along the walls of the room they used for an office. The hall too, that the office opened on, was lined with them. They had the complete marble quality of all looking alike. Sculpture had always seemed a dull business-still, bronzes looked like something. But marble busts all looked like a cemetery. There was one fine cemetery though-the one at Pisa. Genoa was the place to see the bad marbles. This had been the villa of a very wealthy German and the busts must have cost him plenty. I wondered who had done them and how much he got. I tried to make out whether they were members of the family or what; but they were all uniformly classical. You could not tell anything about them.

I sat on a chair and held my cap. We were supposed to wear steel helmets even in Gorizia but they were uncomfortable and too bloody theatrical in a town where the civilian inhabitants had not been evacuated. I wore one when we went up to the posts and carried an English gas mask. We were just beginning to get some of them. They were a real mask. Also we were required to wear an automatic pistol; even doctors and sanitary officers. I felt it against the back of the chair. You were liable to arrest if you did not have one worn in plain sight. Rinaldi carried a holster stuffed with toilet paper. I wore a real one and felt like a gunman until I practised firing it. It was an Astra 7.65 caliber with a short barrel and it

jumped so sharply when you let it off that there was no question of hitting anything. I practised with it, holding below the target and trying to master the jerk of the ridiculous short barrel until I could hit within a yard of where I aimed at twenty paces and then the ridiculousness of carrying a pistol at all came over me and I soon forgot it and carried it flopping against the small of my back with no feeling at all except a vague sort of shame when I met English-speaking people. I sat now in the chair and an orderly of some sort looked at me disapprovingly from behind a desk while I looked at the marble floor, the pillars with the marble busts, and the frescoes on the wall and waited for Miss Barkley. The frescoes were not bad. Any frescoes were good when they started to peel and flake off.

I saw Catherine Barkley coming down the hall, and stood up. She did not seem tall walking toward me but she looked very lovely.

"Good-evening, Mr. Henry," she said.

"How do you do?" I said. The orderly was listening behind the desk.

"Shall we sit here or go out in the garden?"

"Let's go out. It's much cooler."

I walked behind her out into the garden, the orderly looking after us. When we were out on the gravel drive she said, "Where have you been?"

"I've been out on post."

"You couldn't have sent me a note?"

"No," I said. "Not very well. I thought I was coming back."

"You ought to have let me know, darling."

We were off the driveway, walking under the trees. I took her hands, then stopped and kissed her.

"Isn't there anywhere we can go?"

"No," she said. "We have to just walk here. You've been away a long time."

"This is the third day. But I'm back now."

She looked at me, “And you do love me?”

“Yes.”

“You did say you loved me, didn’t you?”

“Yes,” I lied. “I love you.” I had not said it before.

“And you call me Catherine?”

“Catherine.” We walked on a way and were stopped under a tree.

“Say, ‘I’ve come back to Catherine in the night.’”

“I’ve come back to Catherine in the night.”

“Oh, darling, you have come back, haven’t you?”

“Yes.”

“I love you so and it’s been awful. You won’t go away?”

“No. I’ll always come back.”

“Oh, I love you so. Please put your hand there again.”

“It’s not been away.” I turned her so I could see her face when I kissed her and I saw that her eyes were shut. I kissed both her shut eyes. I thought she was probably a little crazy. It was all right if she was. I did not care what I was getting into. This was better than going every evening to the house for officers where the girls climbed all over you and put your cap on backward as a sign of affection between their trips upstairs with brother officers. I knew I did not love Catherine Barkley nor had any idea of loving her. This was a game, like bridge, in which you said things instead of playing cards. Like bridge you had to pretend you were playing for money or playing for some stakes. Nobody had mentioned what the stakes were. It was all right with me.

“I wish there was some place we could go,” I said. I was experiencing the masculine difficulty of making love very long standing up.

“There isn’t any place,” she said. She came back from wherever she had been.

“We might sit there just for a little while.”

We sat on the flat stone bench and I held Catherine Barkley’s

hand. She would not let me put my arm around her.

"Are you very tired?" she asked.

"No."

She looked down at the grass.

"This is a rotten game we play, isn't it?"

"What game?"

"Don't be dull."

"I'm not, on purpose."

"You're a nice boy," she said. "And you play it as well as you know how. But it's a rotten game."

"Do you always know what people think?"

"Not always. But I do with you. You don't have to pretend you love me. That's over for the evening. Is there anything you'd like to talk about?"

"But I do love you."

"Please let's not lie when we don't have to. I had a very fine little show and I'm all right now. You see I'm not mad and I'm not gone off. It's only a little sometimes."

I pressed her hand, "Dear Catherine."

"It sounds very funny now—Catherine. You don't pronounce it very much alike. But you're very nice. You're a very good boy."

"That's what the priest said."

"Yes, you're very good. And you will come and see me?"

"Of course."

"And you don't have to say you love me. That's all over for a while." She stood up and put out her hand. "Goodnight."

I wanted to kiss her.

"No," she said. "I'm awfully tired."

"Kiss me, though," I said.

"I'm awfully tired, darling."

"Kiss me."

"Do you want to very much?"

"Yes."

We kissed and she broke away suddenly. “No. Goodnight, please, darling.” We walked to the door and I saw her go in and down the hall. I liked to watch her move. She went on down the hall. I went on home. It was a hot night and there was a good deal going on up in the mountains. I watched the flashes on San Gabriele.

I stopped in front of the Villa Rossa. The shutters were up but it was still going on inside. Somebody was singing. I went on home. Rinaldi came in while I was undressing.

“Ah, ha!” he said. “It does not go so well. Baby is puzzled.”

“Where have you been?”

“At the Villa Rossa. It was very edifying, baby. We all sang. Where have you been?”

“Calling on the British.”

“Thank God I did not become involved with the British.”

Chapter VII

I came back the next afternoon from our first mountain post and stopped the car at the *smistimento* where the wounded and sick were sorted by their papers and the papers marked for the different hospitals. I had been driving and I sat in the car and the driver took the papers in. It was a hot day and the sky was very bright and blue and the road was white and dusty. I sat in the high seat of the Fiat and thought about nothing. A regiment went by in the road and I watched them pass. The men were hot and sweating. Some wore their steel helmets but most of them carried them slung from their packs. Most of the helmets were too big and came down almost over the ears of the men who wore them. The officers all wore helmets; better-fitting helmets. It was half of the brigata Basilicata. I identified them by their red and white striped collar mark. There were stragglers going by long after the regiment had passed-men who could not keep up with their platoons. They were sweaty, dusty and tired. Some looked pretty bad. A soldier came along after the last of the stragglers. He was walking with a limp. He stopped and sat down beside the road. I got down and went over.

"What's the matter?"

He looked at me, then stood up.

"I'm going on."

"What's the trouble?"

"— the war."

"What's wrong with your leg?"

"It's not my leg. I got a rupture."

"Why don't you ride with the transport?" I asked. "Why don't

you go to the hospital?"

"They won't let me. The lieutenant said I slipped the truss on purpose."

"Let me feel it."

"It's way out."

"Which side is it on?"

"Here."

I felt it.

"Cough," I said.

"I'm afraid it will make it bigger. It's twice as big as it was this morning."

"Sit down," I said. "As soon as I get the papers on these wounded I'll take you along the road and drop you with your medical officers."

"He'll say I did it on purpose."

"They can't do anything," I said. "It's not a wound. You've had it before, haven't you?"

"But I lost the truss."

"They'll send you to a hospital."

"Can't I stay here, Tenente?"

"No, I haven't any papers for you."

The driver came out of the door with the papers for the wounded in the car.

"Four for 105. Two for 132," he said. They were hospitals beyond the river.

"You drive," I said. I helped the soldier with the rupture up on the seat with us.

"You speak English?" he asked.

"Sure."

"How you like this goddam war?"

"Rotten."

"I say it's rotten. Jesus Christ, I say it's rotten."

"Were you in the States?"

“Sure. In Pittsburgh. I knew you was an American.”

“Don’t I talk Italian good enough?”

“I knew you was an American all right.”

“Another American,” said the driver in Italian looking at the hernia man.

“Listen, lootenant. Do you have to take me to that regiment?”

“Yes.”

“Because the captain doctor knew I had this rupture. I threw away the goddam truss so it would get bad and I wouldn’t have to go to the line again.”

“I see.”

“Couldn’t you take me no place else?”

“If it was closer to the front I could take you to a first medical post. But back here you’ve got to have papers.”

“If I go back they’ll make me get operated on and then they’ll put me in the line all the time.”

I thought it over.

“You wouldn’t want to go in the line all the time, would you?” he asked.

“No.”

“Jesus Christ, ain’t this a goddam war?”

“Listen,” I said. “You get out and fall down by the road and get a bump on your head and I’ll pick you up on our way back and take you to a hospital. We’ll stop by the road here, Aldo.” We stopped at the side of the road. I helped him down.

“I’ll be right here, lieutenant,” he said.

“So long,” I said. We went on and passed the regiment about a mile ahead, then crossed the river, cloudy with snow-water and running fast through the spiles of the bridge, to ride along the road across the plain and deliver the wounded at the two hospitals. I drove coming back and went fast with the empty car to find the man from Pittsburgh. First we passed the regiment, hotter and slower than ever: then the stragglers. Then we saw a horse

ambulance stopped by the road. Two men were lifting the hernia man to put him in. They had come back for him. He shook his head at me. His helmet was off and his forehead was bleeding below the hair line. His nose was skinned and there was dust on the bloody patch and dust in his hair.

"Look at the bump, lieutenant!" he shouted. "Nothing to do. They come back for me."

When I got back to the villa it was five o'clock and I went out where we washed the cars, to take a shower. Then I made out my report in my room, sitting in my trousers and an undershirt in front of the open window. In two days the offensive was to start and I would go with the cars to Plava. It was a long time since I had written to the States and I knew I should write but I had let it o so long that it was almost impossible to write now. There was nothing to write about. I sent a couple of army Zona di Guerra post-cards, crossing out everything except, I am well. That should handle them. Those post-cards would be very fine in America; strange and mysterious. This was a strange and mysterious war zone but I supposed it was quite well run and grim compared to other wars with the Austrians. The Austrian army was created to give Napoleon victories; any Napoleon. I wished we had a Napoleon, but instead we had II Generale Cadorna, fat and prosperous and Vittorio Emmanuele, the tiny man with the long thin neck and the goat beard. Over on the right they had the Duke of Aosta. Maybe he was too good-looking to be a great general but he looked like a man. Lots of them would have liked him to be king. He looked like a king. He was the King's uncle and commanded the third army. We were in the second army. There were some British batteries up with the third army. I had met two gunners from that lot, in Milan. They were very nice and we had a big evening. They were big and shy and embarrassed and very appreciative together of anything that happened. I wish that I was with the British. It would have been much simpler. Still I would probably have been killed. Not in this

ambulance business. Yes, even in the ambulance business. British ambulance drivers were killed sometimes. Well, I knew I would not be killed. Not in this war. It did not have anything to do with me. It seemed no more dangerous to me myself than war in the movies. I wished to God it was over though. Maybe it would finish this summer. Maybe the Austrians would crack. They had always cracked in other wars. What was the matter with this war? Everybody said the French were through. Rinaldi said that the French had mutinied and troops marched on Paris. I asked him what happened and he said, “Oh, they stopped them.” I wanted to go to Austria without war. I wanted to go to the Black Forest. I wanted to go to the Hartz Mountains. Where were the Hartz Mountains anyway? They were fighting in the Carpathians. I did not want to go there anyway. It might be good though. I could go to Spain if there was no war. The sun was going down and the day was cooling off. After supper I would go and see Catherine Barkley. I wish she were here now. I wished I were in Milan with her. I would like to eat at the Cova and then walk down the Via Manzoni in the hot evening and cross over and turn off along the canal and go to the hotel with Catherine Barkley. Maybe she would. Maybe she would pretend that I was her boy that was killed and we would go in the front door and the porter would take off his cap and I would stop at the concierge’s desk and ask for the key and she would stand by the elevator and then we would get in the elevator and it would go up very slowly clicking at all the floors and then our floor and the boy would open the door and stand there and she would step out and I would step out and we would walk down the hall and I would put the key in the door and open it and go in and then take down the telephone and ask them to send a bottle of capri bianca in a silver bucket full of lice and you would hear the ice against the pail coming down the coridor and the boy would knock and I would say leave it outside e door please. Because we would-not wear any clothes because it was so hot and the window open

and the swallows flying over the roofs of the houses and when it was dark afterward and you went to the window very small bats hunting over the houses and close down over the trees and we would drink the capri and the door locked and it hot and only a sheet and the whole night and we would both love each other all night in the hot night in Milan. That was how it ought to be. I would eat quickly and go and see Catherine Barkley.

They talked too much at the mess and I drank wine because tonight we were not all brothers unless I drank a little and talked with the priest about Archbishop Ireland who was, it seemed, a noble man and with whose injustice, the injustices he had received and in which I participated as an American, and of which I had never heard, I feigned acquaintance. It would have been impolite not to have known something of them when I had listened to such a splendid explanation of their causes which were, after all, it seemed, misunderstandings. I thought he had a fine name and he came from Minnesota which made a lovely name: Ireland of Minnesota, Ireland of Wisconsin, Ireland of Michigan. What made it pretty was that it sounded like Island. No that wasn't it. There was more to it than that. Yes, father. That is true, father. Perhaps, father. No, father. Well, maybe yes, father. You know more about it than I do, father. The priest was good but dull. The officers were not good but dull. The King was good but dull. The wine was bad but not dull. It took the enamel off your teeth and left it on the roof of your mouth.

"And the priest was locked up," Rocca said, "because they found the three per cent bonds on his person. It was in France of course. Here they would never have arrested him. He denied all knowledge of the five per cent bonds. This took place at Beziers, I was there and reading of it in the paper, went to the jail and asked to see the priest. It was quite evident he had stolen the bonds."

"I don't believe a word of this," Rinaldi said.

"Just as you like," Rocca said. "But I am telling it for our priest

here. It is very informative. He is a priest; he will appreciate it."

The priest smiled. "Go on," he said. "I am listening."

"Of course some of the bonds were not accounted for but the priest had all of the three per cent bonds and several local obligations, I forget exactly what they were. So I went to the jail, now this is the point of the story, and I stood outside his cell and I said as though I were going to confession, 'Bless me, father, for you have sinned.'"

There was great laughter from everybody.

"And what did he say?" asked the priest. Rocca ignored this and went on to explain the joke to me. "You see the point, don't you?" It seemed it was a very funny joke if you understood it properly. They poured me more wine and I told the story about the English private soldier who was placed under the shower bath. Then the major told the story of the eleven Czechoslovaks and the Hungarian corporal. After some more wine I told the story of the jockey who found the penny. The major said there was an Italian story something like that about the duchess who could not sleep at night. At this point the priest left and I told the story about the travelling salesman who arrived at five o'clock in the morning at Marseilles when the mistral was blowing. The major, said he had heard a report that I could drink. I denied this. He said it was true and by the corpse of Bacchus we would test whether it was true or not. Not Bacchus, I said. Not Bacchus. Yes, Bacchus, he said. I should drink cup for cup and glass for glass with Bassi, Fillipo Vincenza. Bassi said no that was no test because he had already drunk twice as much as I. I said that was a foul lie and, Bacchus or no Bacchus, Fillipo Vincenza Bassi or Bassi FiIlippo Vicenza had never touched a drop all evening and what was his name anyway? He said was my name Frederico Enrico or Enrico Federico? I said let the best man win, Bacchus barred, and the major started us with red wine in mugs. Half-way through the wine I did not want anymore. I remembered where I was going.

“Bassi wins,” I said. “He’s a better man than I am. I have to go.”

“He does really,” said Rinaldi. “He has a rendezvous. I know all about it.”

“I have to go.”

“Another night,” said Bassi. “Another night when you feel stronger.” He slapped me on the shoulder. There were lighted candles on the table. All the officers were very happy.

“Goodnight, gentlemen,” I said.

Rinaldi went out with me. We stood outside the door on the patch and he said, “You better not go up there drunk.”

“I’m not drunk, Rinin. Really.”

“You’d better chew some coffee.”

“Nonsense.”

“I’ll get some, baby. You walk up and down.” He came back with a handful of roasted coffee beans. “Chew those, baby, and God be with you.”

“Bacchus,” I said.

“I’ll walk down with you.”

“I’m perfectly all right.”

We walked along together through the town and I chewed the coffee. At the gate of the driveway that led up to the British villa, Rinaldi said goodnight.

“Goodnight,” I said. “Why don’t you come in?”

He shook his head. “No,” he said. “I like the simpler pleasures.”

“Thank you for the coffee beans.”

“Nothing, baby. Nothing.”

I started down the driveway. The outlines of the cypresses that lined it were sharp and clear. I looked back and saw Rinaldi standing watching me and waved to him.

I sat in the reception hall of the villa, waiting for Catherine Barkley to come down. Someone was coming down the hallway. I stood up, but it was not Catherine. It was Miss Ferguson.

“Hello,” she said. “Catherine asked me to tell you she was sorry

she couldn't see you this evening."

"I'm so sorry. I hope she's not ill."

"She's not awfully well."

"Will you tell her how sorry I am?"

"Yes, I will."

"Do you think it would be any good to try and see her tomorrow?"

"Yes, I do."

"Thank you very much," I said. "Goodnight."

I went out the door and suddenly I felt lonely and empty. I had treated seeing Catherine very lightly, I had gotten somewhat drunk and had nearly forgotten to come but when I could not see her there I was feeling lonely and hollow.

Chapter VIII

The next afternoon we heard there was to be an attack up the river that night and that we were to take four cars there. Nobody knew anything about it although they all spoke with great positiveness and strategical knowledge. I was riding in the first car and as we passed the entry to the British hospital I told the driver to stop. The other cars pulled up. I got out and told the driver to go on and that if we had not caught up to them at the junction of the road to Cormons to wait there. I hurried up the driveway and inside the reception hall I asked for Miss Barkley.

"She's on duty."

"Could I see her just for a moment?"

They sent an orderly to see and she came back with him.

"I stopped to ask if you were better. They told me you were on duty, so I asked to see you."

"I'm quite well," she said, "I think the heat knocked me over yesterday. "

"I have to go."

"I'll just step out the door a minute."

"And you're all right?" I asked outside.

"Yes, darling. Are you coming tonight?"

"No. I'm leaving now for a show up above Plava."

"A show?"

"I don't think it's anything."

"And you'll be back?"

"Tomorrow."

She was unclasping something from her neck. She put it In my

hand. “It’s a Saint Anthony,” she said. “And come tomorrow night.”

“You’re not a Catholic, are you?”

“No. But they say a Saint Anthony’s very useful.”

“I’ll take care of him for you. Goodbye.”

“No,” she said, “not goodbye.”

“All right.”

“Be a good boy and be careful. No, you can’t kiss me here. You can’t.”

“All right.”

I looked back and saw her standing on the steps. She waved and I kissed my hand and held it out. She waved again and then I was out of the driveway and climbing up into the seat of the ambulance and we started. The Saint Anthony was in a little white metal capsule. I opened the capsule and spilled him out into my hand.

“Saint Anthony?” asked the driver.

“Yes.”

“I have one.” His right hand left the wheel and opened a button on his tunic and pulled it out from under his shirt.

“See?”

I put my Saint Anthony back in the capsule, spilled the thin gold chain together and put it all in my breast pocket.

“You don’t wear him?”

“No.”

“It’s better to wear him. That’s what it’s for.”

“All right,” I said. I undid the clasp of the gold chain and put it around my neck and clasped it. The saint hung down on the outside of my uniform and I undid the throat of my tunic, unbuttoned the shirt collar and dropped him in under the shirt. I felt him in his metal box against my chest while we drove. Then I forgot about him. After I was wounded I never found him. Someone probably got it at one of the dressing stations.

We drove fast when we were over the bridge and soon we saw the dust of the other cars ahead down the road. The road curved

and we saw the three cars looking quite small, the dust rising from the wheels and going off through the trees. We caught them and passed them and turned off on a road that climbed up into the hills. Driving in convoy is not unpleasant if you are the first car and I settled back in the seat and watched the country. We were in the foot-hills on the near side of the river and as the road mounted there were the high mountains off to the north with snow still on the tops. I looked back and saw the three cars all climbing, spaced by the interval of their dust. We passed a long column of loaded mules, the drivers walking along beside the mules wearing red fezzes. They were bersaglieri.

Beyond the mule train the road was empty and we climbed through the hills and then went down over the shoulder of a long hill into a river-valley. There were trees along both sides of the road and through the right line of trees I saw the river, the water clear, fast and shallow. The river was low and there were stretches of sand and pebbles with a narrow channel of water and sometimes the water spread like a sheen over the pebbly bed. Close to the bank I saw deep pools, the water blue like the sky. I saw arched stone bridges over the river where tracks turned off from the road and we passed stone farmhouses with pear trees candelabraed against their south walls and low stone walls in the fields. The road went up the valley a long way and then we turned off and commenced to climb into the hills again. The road climbed steeply going up and back and forth through chestnut woods to level finally along a ridge. I could look down through the woods and see, far below, with the sun on it, the line of the river that separated the two armies. We went along the rough new military road that followed the crest of the ridge and I looked to the north at the two ranges of mountains, green and dark to the snow-line and then white and lovely in the sun. Then, as the road mounted along the ridge, I saw a third range of mountains, higher snow mountains, that looked chalky white and furrowed, with strange planes, and then there were mountains far

off beyond all these that you could hardly tell if you really saw. Those were all the Austrians' mountains and we had nothing like them. Ahead there was a rounded turn-off in the road to the right and looking down I could see the road dropping through the trees. There were troops on this road and motor trucks and mules with mountain guns and as we went down, keeping to the side, I could see the river far down below, the line of ties and rails running along it, the old bridge where the railway crossed to the other side and across, under a hill beyond the river, the broken houses of the little town that was to be taken.

It was nearly dark when we came down and turned onto the main road that ran beside the river.

Chapter IX

The road was crowded and there were screens of corn-stalk and straw matting on both sides and matting over the top so that it was like the entrance at a circus or a native village. We drove slowly in this matting-covered tunnel and came out onto a bare cleared space where the railway station had been. The road here was below the level of the river bank and all along the side of the sunken road there were holes dug in the bank with infantry in them. The sun was going down and looking up along the bank as we drove I saw the Austrian observation balloons above the hills on the other side dark against the sunset. We parked the cars beyond a brickyard. The ovens and some deep holes had been equipped as dressing stations. There were three doctors that I knew. I talked with the major and learned that when it should start and our cars should be loaded we would drive them back along the screened road and up to the main road along the ridge where there would be a post and other cars to clear them. He hoped the road would not jam. It was a one-road show. The road was screened because it was in sight of the Austrians across the river. Here at the brickyard we were sheltered from rifle or machine gun fire by the river bank. There was one smashed bridge across the river. They were going to put over another bridge when the bombardment started and some troops were to cross at the shallows up above at the bend of the river. The major was a little man with upturned mustaches. He had been in the war in Libya and wore two wound-stripes. He said that if the thing went well he would see that I was decorated. I said I hoped it would go well but that he was too kind. I asked him if there was a

big dugout where the drivers could stay and he sent a soldier to show me. I went with him and found the dugout, which was very good. The drivers were pleased with it and I left them there. The major asked me to have a drink with him and two other officers. We drank rum and it was very friendly. Outside it was getting dark. I asked what time the attack was to be and they said as soon as it was dark. I went back to the drivers. They were sitting in the dugout talking and when I came in they stopped. I gave them each a package of cigarettes, Macedonias, loosely packed cigarettes that spilled tobacco and needed to have the ends twisted before you smoked them. Manera lit his lighter and passed it around. The lighter was shaped like a Fiat radiator. I told them what I had heard.

"Why didn't we see the post when we came down?" Passini asked.

"It was just beyond where we turned off."

"That road will be a dirty mess," Manera said.

"They'll shell the — out of us."

"Probably."

"What about eating, lieutenant? We won't get a chance to eat after this thing starts."

"I'll go and see now," I said.

"You want us to stay here or can we look around?"

"Better stay here."

I went back to the major's dugout and he said the field kitchen would be along and the drivers could come and get their stew. He would loan them mess tins if they did not have them. I said I thought they had them. I went back and told the drivers I would get them as soon as the food came. Manera said he hoped it would come before the bombardment started. They were silent until I went out. They were all mechanics and hated the war.

I went out to look at the cars and see what was going on and then came back and sat down in the dugout with the four drivers.

We sat on the ground with our backs against the wall and smoked. Outside it was nearly dark. The earth of the dugout was warm and dry and I let my shoulders back against the wall, sitting on the small of my back, and relaxed.

"Who goes to the attack?" asked Gavuzzi.

"Bersaglieri."

"All bersaglieri?"

"I think so."

"There aren't enough troops here for a real attack."

"It is probably to draw attention from where the real attack will be. "

"Do the men know that who attack?"

"I don't think so."

"Of course they don't," Manera said. "They wouldn't attack if they did."

"Yes, they would," Passini said. "Bersaglieri are fools."

"They are brave and have good discipline," I said.

"They are big through the chest by measurement, and healthy. But they are still fools."

"The granatieri are tall," Manera said. This was a joke. They all laughed.

"Were you there, Tenente, when they wouldn't attack and they shot every tenth man?"

"No."

"It is true. They lined them up afterward and took every tenth man. Carabinieri shot them."

"Carabinieri," said Passini and spat on the floor. "But those grenadiers; all over six feet. They wouldn't attack."

"If everybody would not attack the war would be over," Manera said.

"It wasn't that way with the granatieri. They were afraid. The officers all came from such good families."

"Some of the officers went alone."

“A sergeant shot two officers who would not get out.”

“Some troops went out.”

‘Those that went out were not lined up when they took the tenth men.”

“One of those shot by the carabinieri is from my town,” Passini said. “He was a big smart tall boy to be in the granatieri. Always in Rome. Always with the girls. Always with the carabinieri.” He laughed. “Now they have a guard outside his house with a bayonet and nobody can come to see his mother and father and sisters and his father loses his civil rights and cannot even vote. They are all without law to protect them. Anybody can take their property.”

“If it wasn’t that that happens to their families nobody would go to the attack.”

“Yes. Alpini would. These V. E. soldiers would. Some bersaglieri.”

“Bersaglieri have run too. Now they try to forget it.”

“You should not let us talk this way, Tenente. Evviva l’esercito,” Passini said sarcastically.

“I know how you talk,” I said. “But as long as you drive the cars and behave—”

“—and don’t talk so other officers can hear,” Manera finished.

“I believe we should get the war over,” I said. “It would not finish it if one side stopped fighting. It would only be worse if we stopped fighting.”

“It could not be worse,” Passini said respectfully. “There is nothing worse than war.”

“Defeat is worse.”

“I do not believe it,” Passini said still respectfully. “What is defeat? You go home.”

“They come after you. They take your home. They take your sisters.”

“I don’t believe it,” Passini said. ‘’They can’t do that to everybody. Let everybody defend his home. Let them keep their

sisters in the house."

"They hang you. They come and make you be a soldier again. Not in the auto-ambulance, in the infantry."

"They can't hang everyone."

"An outside nation can't make you be a soldier," Manera said. "At the first battle you all run."

"Like the Tchecos."

"I think you do not know anything about being conquered and so you think it is not bad."

"Tenente," Passini said. "We understand you let us talk. Listen. There is nothing as bad as war. We in the auto-ambulance cannot even realize at all how bad it is. When people realize how bad it is they cannot do anything to stop it because they go crazy. There are some people who never realize. There are people who are afraid of their officers. It is with them the war is made."

"I know it is bad but we must finish it."

"It doesn't finish. There is no finish to a war."

"Yes there is."

Passini shook his head.

"War is not won by victory. What if we take San Gabriele? What if we take the Carso and Monfalcone and Trieste? Where are we then? Did you see all the far mountains to-day? Do you think we could take all them too? Only if the Austrians stop fighting. One side must stop fighting. Why don't we stop fighting? If they come down into Italy they will get tired and go away. They have their own country. But no, instead there is a war."

"You're an orator."

"We think. We read. We are not peasants. We are mechanics. But even the peasants know better than to believe in a war. Everybody hates this war."

"There is a class that controls a country that is stupid and does not realize anything and never can. That is why we have this war."

"Also they make money out of it."

“Most of them don’t,” said Passini. ‘’They are too stupid. They do it for nothing. For stupidity.”

“We must shut up,” said Manera. “We talk too much even for the Tenente.”

“He likes it,” said Passini. “We will convert him.”

“But now we will shut up,” Manera said.

“Do we eat yet, Tenente?” Gavuzzi asked.

“I will go and see,” I said. Gordini stood up and went outside with me.

“Is there anything I can do, Tenente? Can I help in any way?” He was the quietest one of the four. “Come with me if you want,” I said, “and we’ll see.”

It was dark outside and the long light from the search-lights was moving over the mountains. There were big search-lights on that front mounted on camions that you passed sometimes on the roads at night, close behind the lines, the earn ion stopped a little off the road, an officer directing the light and the crew scared. We crossed the brickyard, and stopped at the main dressing station. There was a little shelter of green branches outside over the entrance and in the dark the night wind rustled the leaves dried by the sun. Inside there was a light. The major was at the telephone sitting on a box. One of the medical captains said the attack had been put forward an hour. He offered me a glass of cognac. I looked at the board tables, the instruments shining in the light, the basins and the stoppered bottles. Gordini stood behind me. The major got up from the telephone.

“It starts now,” he said. “It has been put back again.”

I looked outside, it was dark and the Austrian search-lights were moving on the mountains behind us. It was quiet for a moment still, then from all the guns behind us the bombardment started.

“Savoia,” said the major.

“About the soup, major,” I said. He did not hear me. I repeated it.

“It hasn’t come up.”

A big shell came in and burst outside in the brickyard. Another burst and in the noise you could hear the smaller noise of the brick and dirt raining down.

“What is there to eat?”

“We have a little pasta asciutta,” the major said.

“I’ll take what you can give me.”

The major spoke to an orderly who went out of sight in the back and came back with a metal basin of cold cooked macaroni. I handed it to Gordini.

“Have you any cheese?”

The major spoke grudgingly to the orderly who ducked back into the hole again and came out with a quarter of a white cheese.

“Thank you very much,” I said.

“You’d better not go out.”

Outside something was set down beside the entrance. One of the two men who had carried it looked in.

“Bring him in,” said the major. “What’s the matter with you? Do you want us to come outside and get him?”

The two stretcher-bearers picked up the man under the arms and by the legs and brought him in.

“Slit the tunic,” the major said.

He held a forceps with some gauze in the end. The two captains took off their coats. “Get out of here,” the major said to the two stretcher-bearers.

“Come on,” I said to Gordini.

“You better wait until the shelling is over,” the major said over his shoulder.

“They want to eat,” I said.

“As you wish.”

Outside we ran across the brickyard. A shell burst short near the river bank. Then there was one that we did not hear coming until the sudden rush. We both went Hat and with the Hash and bump of

the burst and the smell heard the singing off of the fragments and the rattle of falling brick. Gordini got up and ran for the dugout. I was after him, holding the cheese, its smooth surface covered with brick dust. Inside the dugout were the three drivers sitting against the wall, smoking.

"Here, you patriots," I said.

"How are the cars?" Manera asked.

"All right."

"Did they scare you, Tenente?"

"You're damned right," I said.

I took out my knife, opened it, wiped off the blade and pared off the dirty outside surface of the cheese. Gavuzzi handed me the basin of macaroni.

"Start in to eat, Tenente."

"No," I said. "Put it on the floor, We'll all eat."

"There are no forks."

"What the hell," I said in English.

I cut the cheese into pieces and laid them on the macaroni.

"Sit down to it," I said. They sat down and waited. I put thumb and fingers into the macaroni and lifted. A mass loosened.

"Lift it high, Tenente."

I lifted it to arm's length and the strands cleared. I lowered it into the mouth, sucked and snapped in the ends, and chewed, then took a bite of cheese, chewed, and then a drink of the wine. It tasted of rusty metal. I handed the canteen back to Passini.

"It's rotten," he said. "It's been in there too long. I had it in the car. "

They were all eating, holding their chins close over the basin, tipping their heads back, sucking in the ends. I took another mouthful and some cheese and a rinse of wine. Something landed outside that shook the earth.

"Four hundred twenty or minnenwerfer," Gavuzzi said.

"There aren't any four hundred twenties in the mountains," I

said.

"They have big Skoda guns. I've seen the holes."

"Three hundred fives."

We went on eating. There was a cough, a noise like a railway engine starting and then an explosion that shook the earth again.

"This isn't a deep dugout," Passini said.

"That was a big trench mortar."

"Yes, sir."

I ate the end of my piece of cheese and took a swallow of wine. Through the other noise I heard a cough, then came the chuh-chuh-chuh-chuh—then there was a flash, as when a blast-furnace door is swung open, and a roar that started white and went red and on and on in a rushing wind. I tried to breathe but my breath would not come and I felt myself rush bodily out of myself and out and out and out and all the time bodily in the wind. I went out swiftly, all of myself, and I knew I was dead and that it had all been a mistake to think you just died. Then I floated, and instead of going on I felt myself slide back. I breathed and I was back. The ground was torn up and in front of my head there was a splintered beam of wood. In the jolt of my head I heard somebody crying. I thought somebody was screaming. I tried to move but I could not move. I heard the machine guns and rifles firing across the river and all along the river. There was a great splashing and I saw the starshells go up and burst and float whitely and rockets going up and heard the bombs, all this in a moment, and then I heard close to me someone saying "Mama Mia! Oh, mama Mia!" I pulled and twisted and got my legs loose finally and turned around and touched him. It was Passini and when I touched him he screamed. His legs were toward me and I saw in the dark and the light that they were both smashed above the knee. One leg was gone and the other was held by tendons and part of the trouser and the stump twitched and jerked as though it were not connected. He bit his arm and moaned, "Oh mama mia, mama Mia," then, "Dio te salve, Maria. Dio te salve, Maria. Oh

Jesus shoot me Christ shoot me mama mia mama Mia oh purest lovely Mary shoot me. Stop it. Stop it. Stop it. Oh Jesus lovely Mary stop it. Oh oh oh oh," then choking, "Mama mama mia." Then he was quiet, biting his arm, the stump of his leg twitching.

"Porta feriti!" I shouted holding my hands cupped. "Porta feriti!" I tried to get closer to Passini to try to put a tourniquet on the legs but I could not move. I tried again and my legs moved a little. I could pull backward along with my arms and elbows. Passini was quiet now. I sat beside him, undid my tunic and tried to rip the tail of my shirt. It would not rip and I bit the edge of the cloth to start it. Then I thought of his puttees. I had on wool stockings but Passini wore puttees. All the drivers wore puttees but Passini had only one leg. I unwound the puttee and while I was doing it I saw there was no need to try and make a tourniquet because he was dead already. I made sure he was dead. There were three others to locate. I sat up straight and as I did so something inside my head moved like the weights on a doll's eyes and it hit me inside in back of my eyeballs. My legs felt warm and wet and my shoes were wet and warm inside. I knew that I was hit and leaned over and put my hand on my knee. My knee wasn't there. My hand went in and my knee was down on my shin. I wiped my hand on my shirt and another floating light came very slowly down and I looked at my leg and was very afraid. Oh, God, I said, get me out of here. I knew, however, that there had been three others. There were four drivers. Passini was dead. That left three. Someone took hold of me under the arms and somebody else lifted my legs.

"There are three others," I said. "One is dead."

"It's Manera. We went for a stretcher but there wasn't any. How are you, Tenente?"

"Where is Gordini and Gavuzzi?"

"Gordini's at the post getting bandaged. Gavuzzi has your legs. Hold on to my neck, Tenente. Are you badly hit?"

"In the leg. How is Gordini?"

"He's all right. It was a big trench mortar shell."

"Passini's dead."

"Yes. He's dead."

A shell fell close and they both dropped to the ground and dropped me. "I'm sorry, Tenente," said Manera. "Hang onto my neck."

"If you drop me again."

"It was because we were scared."

"Are you unwounded?"

"We are both wounded a little."

"Can Gordini drive?"

"I don't think so."

They dropped me once more before we reached the post.

"You sons of bitches," I said.

"I am sorry, Tenente," Manera said. "We won't drop you again."

Outside the post a great many of us lay on the ground in the dark. They carried wounded in and brought them out. I could see the light come out from the dressing station when the curtain opened and they brought someone in or out. The dead were off to one side. The doctors were working with their sleeves up to their shoulders and were red as butchers. There were not enough stretchers. Some of the wounded were noisy but most were quiet. The wind blew the leaves in the bower over the door of the dressing station and the night was getting cold. Stretcher-bearers came in all the time, put their stretchers down, unloaded them and went away. As soon as I got to the dressing station Manera brought a medical sergeant out and he put bandages on both my legs. He said there was so much dirt blown into the wound that there had not been much hemorrhage. They would take me as soon as possible. He went back inside. Gordini could not drive, Manera said. His shoulder was smashed and his head was hurt. He had not felt bad but now the shoulder had stiffened. He was sitting up beside one of the brick walls. Manera and Gavuzzi each went off with a load of

wounded. They could drive all right. The British had come with three ambulances and they had two men on each ambulance. One of their drivers came over to me, brought by Gordini who looked very white and sick. The Britisher leaned over.

"Are you hit badly?" he asked. He was a tall man and wore steel-rimmed spectacles.

"In the legs."

"It's not serious I hope. Will you have a cigarette?"

"Thanks."

"They tell me you've lost two drivers."

"Yes. One killed and the fellow that brought you."

"What rotten luck. Would you like us to take the cars?"

"That's what I wanted to ask you."

"We'd take quite good care of them and return them to the villa. 206 aren't you?"

"Yes."

"It's a charming place. I've seen you about. They tell me you're an American."

"Yes."

''I'm English."

"No!"

"Yes, English. Did you think I was Italian? There were some Italians with one of our units."

"It would be fine if you would take the cars," I said.

"We'll be most careful of them," he straightened up. "This chap of yours was very anxious for me to see you." He patted Gordini on the shoulder. Gordini winced and smiled. The Englishman broke into voluble and perfect Italian. "Now everything is arranged. I've seen your Tenente. We will take over the two cars. You won't worry now." He broke off, "I must do something about getting you out of here. I'll see the medical wallahs. We'll take you back with us."

He walked across to the dressing station, stepping carefully among the wounded. I saw the blanket open, the light came out and

he went in.

"He will look after you, Tenente," Gordini said.

"How are you, Franco?"

"I am all right." He sat down beside me. In a moment the blanket in front of the dressing station opened and two stretcher-bearers came out followed by the tall Englishman. He brought them over to me.

"Here is the American Tenente," he said in Italian.

"I'd rather wait," I said. "There are much worse wounded than me. I'm all right."

"Come, come," he said. "Don't be a bloody hero." Then in Italian: "Lift him very carefully about the legs. His legs are very painful. He is the legitimate son of President Wilson." They picked me up and took me into the dressing room. Inside they were operating on all the tables. The little major looked at us furious. He recognized me and waved a forceps.

"Ça va bien?

"Ça va."

"I have brought him in," the tall Englishman said in Italian. "The only son of the American Ambassador. He can be here until you are ready to take him. Then I will take him with my first load." He bent over me. "I'll look up their adjutant to do your papers and it will all go much faster." He stooped to go under the doorway and went out. The major was unhooking the forceps now, dropping them in a basin. I followed his hands with my eyes. Now he was bandaging. Then the stretcher-bearers took the man off the table.

"I'll take the American Tenente," one of the captains said. They lifted me onto the table. It was hard and slippery. There were many strong smells, chemical smells and the sweet smell of blood. They took off my trousers and the medical captain commenced dictating to the sergeant-adjutant while he worked, "Multiple superficial wounds of the left and right thigh and left and right knee and right foot. Profound wounds of right knee and foot. Lacerations of the

scalp (he probed-Does that hurt?-Christ, yes!) with possible fracture of the skull. Incurred in the line of duty. That's what keeps you from being court martialled for self-inflicted wounds," he said. "Would you like a drink of brandy? How did you run into this thing anyway? What were you trying to do? Commit suicide? Antitetanus please, and mark a cross on both legs. Thank you. I'll clean this up a little, wash it out, and put on a dressing. Your blood coagulates beautifully."

The adjutant, looking up from the paper, "What inflicted the wounds?"

The medical captain, "What hit you?"

Me, with the eyes shut, "A trench mortar shell."

The captain, doing things that hurt sharply and severing tissue —"Are you sure?"

Me—trying to lie still and feeling my stomach flutter when the flesh was cut, "I think so."

Captain doctor—{interested in something he was finding), "Fragments of enemy trench-mortar shell. Now I'll probe for some of this if you like but it's not necessary. I'll paint all this and- Does that sting? Good, that's nothing to how it will feel later. The pain hasn't started yet. Bring him a glass of brandy. The shock dulls the pain; but this is all right, you have nothing to worry about if it doesn't infect and it rarely does now. How is your head?"

"Good Christ!" I said.

"Better not drink too much brandy then. If you've got a fracture you don't want inflammation. How does that feel?"

Sweat ran all over me.

"Good Christ!" I said.

"I guess you've got a fracture all right. I'll wrap you up and don't bounce your head around." He bandaged, his hands moving very fast and the bandage coming taut and sure. "All right, good luck and Vive la France."

"He's an American," one of the other captains said.

“I thought you said he was a Frenchman. He talks French,” the captain said. “I’ve known him before. I always thought he was French.” He drank a half tumbler of cognac. “Bring on something serious. Get some more of that Antitetanus.” The captain waved to me. They lifted me and the blanket-flap went across my face as we went out. Outside the sergeant-adjutant knelt down beside me where I lay, “Name?” he asked softly. “Middle name? First name? Rank? Where born? What class? What corps?” and so on. “I’m sorry for your head, Tenente. I hope you feel better. I’m sending you now with the English ambulance.”

“I’m all right,” I said. “Thank you very much.” The pain that the major had spoken about had started and all that was happening was without interest or relation. After a while the English ambulance came up and they put me onto a stretcher and lifted the stretcher up to the ambulance level and shoved it in. There was another stretcher by the side with a man on it whose nose I could see, waxy-looking, out of the bandages. He breathed very heavily. There were stretchers lifted and slid into the slings above. The tall English driver came around and looked in, “I’ll take it very easily,” he said. “I hope you’ll be comfy.” I felt the engine start, felt him climb up into the front seat, felt the brake come off and the clutch go in, then we started. I lay still and let the pain ride.

As the ambulance climbed along the road, it was slow in the traffic, sometimes it stopped, sometimes it backed on a turn, then finally it climbed quite fast. I felt something dripping. At first it dropped slowly and regularly, then it pattered into a stream. I shouted to the driver. He stopped the car and looked in through the hole behind his seat.

“What is it?”

“The man on the stretcher over me has a hemorrhage.”

“We’re not far from the top. I wouldn’t be able to get the stretcher out alone.” He started the car. The stream kept on. In the dark I could not see where it came from the canvas overhead. I

tried to move sideways so that it did not fall on me. Where it had run down under my shirt it was warm and sticky. I was cold and my leg hurt so that it made me sick. After a while the stream from the stretcher above lessened and started to drip again and I heard and felt the canvas above move as the man on the stretcher settled more comfortably.

"How is he?" the Englishman called back. "We're almost up."

"He's dead I think," I said.

The drops fell very slowly, as they fall from an icicle after the sun has gone. It was cold in the car in the night as the road climbed. At the post on the top they took the stretcher out and put another in and we went on.

Chapter X

In the ward at the field hospital they told me a visitor was coming to see me in the afternoon. It was a hot day and there were many flies in the room. My orderly had cut paper into strips and tied the strips to a stick to make a brush that swished the flies away. I watched them settle on the ceiling. When he stopped swishing and fell asleep they came down and I blew them away and finally covered my face with my hands and slept too. It was very hot and when I woke my legs itched. I waked the orderly and he poured mineral water on the dressings. That made the bed damp and cool. Those of us that were awake talked across the ward. The afternoon was a quiet time. In the morning they came to each bed in turn, three men nurses and a doctor and picked you up out of bed and carried you into the dressing room so that the beds could be made while we were having our wounds dressed. It was not a pleasant trip to the dressing room and I did not know until later that beds could be made with men in them. My orderly had finished pouring water and the bed felt cool and lovely and I was telling him where to scratch on the soles of my feet against the itching when one of the doctors brought in Rinaldi. He came in very fast and bent down over the bed and kissed me. I saw he wore gloves.

"How are you, baby? How do you feel? I bring you this—" It was a bottle of cognac. The orderly brought a chair and he sat down, "and good news. You will be decorated. They want to get you the medaglia d'argento but perhaps they can get only the bronze."

"What for?"

“Because you are gravely wounded. They say if you can prove you did any heroic act you can get the silver. Otherwise it will be the bronze. Tell me exactly what happened. Did you do any heroic act?”

“No,” I said. “I was blown up while we were eating cheese.”

“Be serious. You must have done something heroic either before or after. Remember carefully.”

“I did not.”

“Didn’t you carry anybody on your back? Gordini says you carried several people on your back but the medical major at the first post declares it is impossible. He had to sign the proposition for the citation.”

“I didn’t carry anybody. I couldn’t move.”

“That doesn’t matter,” said Rinaldi.

He took off his gloves.

“I think we can get you the silver. Didn’t you refuse to be medically aided before the others?”

“Not very firmly.”

“That doesn’t matter. Look how you are wounded. Look at your valorous conduct in asking to go always to the first line. Besides, the operation was successful.”

“Did they cross the river all right?”

“Enormously. They take nearly a thousand prisoners. It’s in the bulletin. Didn’t you see it?”

“No.”

“I’ll bring it to you. It is a successful coup de main.”

“How is everything?”

“Splendid. We are all splendid. Everybody is proud of you. Tell me just exactly how it happened. I am positive you will get the silver. Go on tell me. Tell me all about it.” He paused and thought. “Maybe you will get an English medal too. There was an English there. I’ll go and see him and ask if he will recommend you. He ought to be able to do something. Do you suffer much? Have a

drink. Orderly, go get a corkscrew. Oh you should see what I did in the removal of three metres of small intestine and better now than ever. It is one for The *Lancet.* You do me a translation and I will send it to The *Lancet.* Every day I am better. Poor dear baby, how do you feel? Where is that damn corkscrew? You are so brave and quiet I forget you are suffering." He slapped his gloves on the edge of the bed.

"Here is the corkscrew, Signor Tenente," the orderly said.

"Open the bottle. Bring a glass. Drink that, baby. How is your poor head? I looked at your papers. You haven't any fracture. That major at the first post was a hog-butcher. I would take you and never hurt you. I never hurt anybody. I learn how to do it. Every day I learn to do things smoother and better. You must forgive me for talking so much, baby. I am very moved to see you badly wounded. There, drink that. It's good. It cost fifteen lire. It ought to be good. Five stars. After I leave here I'll go see that English and he'll get you an English medal."

"They don't give them like that."

"You are so modest. I will send the liaison officer. He can handle the English."

"Have you seen Miss Barkley?"

"I will bring her here. I will go now and bring her here."

"Don't go," I said. "Tell me about Gorizia. How are the girls?"

"There are no girls. For two weeks now they haven't changed them. I don't go there anymore. It is disgraceful. They aren't girls; they are old war comrades."

"You don't go at all?"

"I just go to see if there is anything new. I stop by. They all ask for you. It is a disgrace that they should stay so long that they become friends."

"Maybe girls don't want to go to the front anymore."

"Of course they do. They have plenty of girls. It is just bad administration. They are keeping them for the pleasure of dugout

hiders in the rear."

"Poor Rinaldi," I said. "All alone at the war with no new girls."

Rinaldi poured himself another glass of the cognac.

"I don't think it will hurt you, baby. You take it."

I drank the cognac and felt it warm all the way down. Rinaldi poured another glass. He was quieter now. He held up the glass. "To your valorous wounds. To the silver medal. Tell me, baby, when you lie here all the time in the hot weather don't you get excited?"

"Sometimes."

"I can't imagine lying like that. I would go crazy."

"You are crazy."

"I wish you were back. No one to come in at night from adventures. No one to make fun of. No one to lend me money. No blood brother and roommate. Why do you get yourself wounded?"

"You can make fun of the priest."

"That priest. It isn't me that makes fun of him. It is the captain. I like him. If you must have a priest have that priest. He's coming to see you. He makes big preparations."

"I like him."

"Oh, I knew it. Sometimes I think you and he are a little that way. You know."

"No, you don't."

"Yes, I do sometimes. A little that way like the number of the first regiment of the Brigata Ancona."

"Oh, go to hell."

He stood up and put on his gloves.

"Oh I love to tease you, baby. With your priest and your English girl, and really you are just like me underneath."

"No, I'm not."

"Yes, we are. You are really an Italian. All fire and smoke and nothing inside. You only pretend to be American. We are brothers and we love each other."

“Be good while I’m gone,” I said.

“I will send Miss Barkley. You are better with her without me. You are purer and sweeter.”

“Oh, go to hell.”

“I will send her. Your lovely cool goddess. English goddess. My God what would a man do with a woman like that except worship her? What else is an Englishwoman good for?”

“You are an ignorant foul-mouthed dago.”

“A what?”

“An ignorant wop.”

“Wop. You are a frozen-faced . . . wop.”

“You are ignorant. Stupid.” I saw that word pricked him and kept on. “Uninformed. Inexperienced, stupid from inexperience.”

“Truly? I tell you something about your good women. Your goddesses. There is only one difference between taking a girl who has always been good and a woman. With a girl it is painful. That’s all I know.” He slapped the bed with his glove. “And you never know if the girl will really like it.”

“Don’t get angry.”

“I’m not angry. I just tell you, baby, for your own good. To save you trouble.”

“That’s the only difference?”

“Yes. But millions of fools like you don’t know it.”

“You were sweet to tell me.”

“We won’t quarrel, baby. I love you too much. But don’t be a fool.”

“No. I’ll be wise like you.”

“Don’t be angry, baby. Laugh. Take a drink. I must go, really.”

“You’re a good old boy.”

“Now you see. Underneath we are the same. We are war brothers. Kiss me goodbye.”

“You’re sloppy.”

“No. I am just more affectionate.”

I felt his breath come toward me. “Goodbye. I come to see you again soon.” His breath went away. “I won’t kiss you if you don’t want. I’ll send your English girl. Goodbye, baby. The cognac is under the bed. Get well soon.”

He was gone.

Chapter XI

It was dusk when the priest came. They had brought the soup and afterward taken away the bowls and I was lying looking at the rows of beds and out the window at the tree-top that moved a little in the evening breeze. The breeze came in through the window and it was cooler with the evening. The flies were on the ceiling now and on the electric light bulbs that hung on wires. The lights were only turned on when someone was brought in at night or when something was being done. It made me feel very young to have the dark come after the dusk and then remain. It was like being put to bed after early supper. The orderly came down between the beds and stopped. Someone was with him. It was the priest. He stood there small, brown-faced, and embarrassed.

"How do you do?" he asked. He put some packages down by the bed, on the floor.

"All right, father."

He sat down in the chair that had been brought for Rinaldi and looked out of the window embarrassedly. I noticed his face looked very tired.

"I can only stay a minute," he said. "It is late."

"It's not late. How is the mess?"

He smiled. "I am still a great joke," he sounded tired too. "Thank God they are all well.

"I am so glad you are all right," he said. "I hope you don't suffer." He seemed very tired and I was not used to seeing him tired.

"Not anymore."

“I miss you at the mess.”

“I wish I were there. I always enjoyed our talking.”

“I brought you a few little things,” he said. He picked up the packages. “This is mosquito netting. This is a bottle of vermouth. You like vermouth? These are English papers.”

“Please open them.”

He was pleased and undid them. I held the mosquito netting in my hands. The vermouth he held up for me to see and then put it on the floor beside the bed. I held up one of the sheaf of English papers. I could read the headlines by turning it so the half-light from the window was on it. It was *The News of the World.*

“The others are illustrated,” he said.

“It will be a great happiness to read them. Where did you get them?”

“I sent for them to Mestre. I will have more.”

“You were very good to come, father. Will you drink a glass of vermouth?”

“Thank you. You keep it. It’s for you.”

“No, drink a glass.”

“All right. I will bring you more then.”

The orderly brought the glasses and opened the bottle. He broke off the cork and the end had to be shoved down into the bottle. I could see the priest was disappointed but he said, “That’s all right. It’s no matter.”

“Here’s to your health, father.”

“To your better health.”

Afterward he held the glass in his hand and we looked at one another. Sometimes we talked and were good friends but tonight it was difficult.

“What’s the matter, father? You seem very tired.”

“I am tired but I have no right to be.”

“It’s the heat.”

“No. This is only the spring. I feel very low.”

“You have the war disgust.”

“No. But I hate the war.”

“I don’t enjoy it,” I said. He shook his head and looked out of the window.

“You do not mind it. You do not see it. You must forgive me. I know you are wounded.”

“That is an accident.”

“Still even wounded you do not see it. I can tell. I do not see it myself but I feel it a little.”

“When I was wounded we were talking about it. Passini was talking.”

The priest put down the glass. He was thinking about something else.

“I know them because I am like they are,” he said.

“You are different though.”

“But really I am like they are.”

“The officers don’t see anything.”

“Some of them do. Some are very delicate and feel worse than any of us.”

“They are mostly different.”

“It is not education or money. It is something else. Even if they had education or money men like Passini would not wish to be officers. I would not be an officer.”

“You rank as an officer. I am an officer.”

“I am not really. You are not even an Italian. You are a foreigner. But you are nearer the officers than you are to the men.”

“What is the difference?”

“I cannot say it easily. There are people who would make war. In this country there are many like that. There are other people who would not make war.”

“But the first ones make them do it.”

“Yes.”

“And I help them.”

“You are a foreigner. You are a patriot.”

“And the ones who would not make war? Can they stop it?”

“I do not know.”

He looked out of the window again. I watched his face.

“Have they ever been able to stop it?”

“They are not organized to stop things and when they get organized their leaders sell them out.”

“Then it’s hopeless?”

“It is never hopeless. But sometimes I cannot hope. I try always to hope but sometimes I cannot.”

“Maybe the war will be over.”

“I hope so.”

“What will you do then?”

“If it is possible I will return to the Abruzzi.”

His brown face was suddenly very happy.

“You love the Abruzzi?”

“Yes, I love it very much.”

“You ought to go there then.”

“I would be too happy. If I could live there and love God and serve Him.”

“And be respected,” I said.

“Yes and be respected. Why not?”

“No reason not. You should be respected.”

“It does not matter. But there in my country it is understood that a man may love God. It is not a dirty joke.”

“I understand.”

He looked at me and smiled.

“You understand but you do not love God.”

“No.”

“You do not love Him at all?’’ he asked.

“I am afraid of Him in the night sometimes.”

“You should love Him.”

“I don’t love much.”

“Yes,” he said. “You do. What you tell me about in the nights. That is not love. That is only passion and lust. When you love you wish to do things for. You wish to sacrifice for. You wish to serve.”

“I don’t love.”

“You will. I know you will. Then you will be happy.”

“I’m happy. I’ve always been happy.”

“It is another thing. You cannot know about it unless you have it.”

“Well,” I said. “If I ever get it I will tell you.”

“I stay too long and talk too much.” He was worried that he really did.

“No. Don’t go. How about loving women? If I really loved some woman would it be like that?”

“I don’t know about that. I never loved any woman.”

“What about your mother?”

“Yes, I must have loved my mother.”

“Did you always love God?”

“Ever since I was a little boy.”

“Well,” I said. I did not know what to say. “You are a fine boy,” I said.

“I am a boy,” he said. “But you call me father.”

“That’s politeness.”

He smiled.

“I must go, really,” he said. “You do not want me for anything?” he asked hopefully.

“No. Just to talk.”

“I will take your greetings to the mess.”

“Thank you for the many fine presents.”

“Nothing.”

“Come and see me again.”

“Yes. Goodbye,” he patted my hand.

“So long,” I said in dialect.

“Ciaou,” he repeated.

It was dark in the room and the orderly, who had sat by the foot of the bed, got up and went out with him. I liked him very much and I hoped he would get back to the Abruzzi some time. He had a rotten life in the mess and he was fine about it but I thought how he would be in his own country. At Capracotta, he had told *me,* there were trout in the stream below the town. It was forbidden to play the flute at night. When the young men serenaded only the flute was forbidden. Why, I had asked. Because it was bad for the girls to hear the flute at night. The peasants all called you "Don" and when you met them they took off their hats. His father hunted every day and stopped to eat at the houses of peasants. They were always honored. For a foreigner to hunt he must present a certificate that he had never been arrested. There were bears on the Gran Sasso D'Italia but it was a long way. Aquila was a fine town. It was cool in the summer at night and the spring in Abruzzi was the most beautiful in Italy. But what was lovely was the fall to go hunting through the chestnut woods. The birds were all good because they fed on grapes and you never took a lunch because the peasants were always honored if you would eat with them at their houses. After a while I went to sleep.

Chapter XII

The room was long with windows on the right-hand side and a door at the far end that went into the dressing room. The row of beds that mine was in faced the windows and another row, under the windows, faced the wall. If you lay on your left side you could see the dressing-room door. There was another door at the far end that people sometimes came in by. If anyone were going to die they put a screen around the bed so you could not see them die, but only the shoes and puttees of doctors and men nurses showed under the bottom of the screen and sometimes at the end there would be whispering. Then the priest would come out from behind the screen and afterward the men nurses would go back behind the screen to come out again carrying the one who was dead with a blanket over him down the corridor between the beds and someone folded the screen and took it away.

That morning the major in charge of the ward asked me if I felt that I could travel the next day. I said I could. He said then they would ship me out early in the morning. He said I would be better off making the trip now before it got too hot.

When they lifted you up out of bed to carry you into the dressing room you could look out of the window and see the new graves in the garden. A soldier sat outside the door that opened onto the garden making crosses and painting on them the names, rank, and regiment of the men who were buried in the garden. He also ran errands for the ward and in his spare time made me a cigarette lighter out of an empty Austrian rifle cartridge. The doctors were very nice and seemed very capable. They were

anxious to ship me to Milan where there were better X-ray facilities and where, after the operation, I could take mechano-therapy. I wanted to go to Milan too. They wanted to get us all out and back as far as possible because all the beds were needed for the offensive, when it should start.

The night before I left the field hospital Rinaldi came in to see me with the major from our mess. They said that I would go to an American hospital in Milan that had just been installed. Some American ambulance units were to be sent down and this hospital would look after them and any other Americans on service in Italy. There were many in the Red Cross. The States had declared war on Germany but not on Austria.

The Italians were sure America would declare war on Austria too and they were very excited about any Americans coming down, even the Red Cross. They asked me if I thought President Wilson would declare war on Austria and I said it was only a matter of days. I did not know what we had against Austria but it seemed logical that they should declare war on her if they did on Germany. They asked me if we would declare war on Turkey. I said that was doubtful. Turkey, I said, was our national bird but the joke translated so badly and they were so puzzled and suspicious that I said yes, we would probably declare war on Turkey. And on Bulgaria? We had drunk several glasses of brandy and I said yes by God on Bulgaria too and on Japan. But, they said, Japan is an ally of England. You can't trust the bloody English. The Japanese want Hawaii, I said. Where is Hawaii? It is in the Pacific Ocean. Why do the Japanese want it? They don't really want it, I said. That is all talk. The Japanese are a wonderful little people fond of dancing and light wines. Like the French, said the major. We will get Nice and Savoia from the French. We will get Corsica and all the Adriatic coast-line, Rinaldi said. Italy will return to the splendors of Rome, said the major. I don't like Rome, I said. It is hot and full of fleas. You don't like Rome? Yes, I love Rome. Rome is the mother of

nations. I will never forget Romulus suckling the Tiber. What? Nothing. Let's all go to Rome. Let's go to Rome tonight and never come back. Rome is a beautiful city, said the major. The mother and father of nations, I said. Roma is feminine, said Rinaldi. It cannot be the father. Who is the father, then, the Holy Ghost? Don't blaspheme. I wasn't blaspheming, I was asking for information. You are drunk, baby. Who made me drunk? I made you drunk, said the major. I made you drunk because I love you and because America is in the war. Up to the hilt, I said. You go away in the morning, baby, Rinaldi said. To Rome, I said. No, to Milan. To Milan, said the major, to the Crystal Palace, to the Cova, to Campari's, to Biffi's, to the galleria. You lucky boy. To the Gran Italia, I said, where I will borrow money from George. To the Scala, said Rinaldi. You will go to the Scala. Every night, I said. You won't be able to afford it every night, said the major.

The tickets are very expensive. I will draw a sight draft on my grandfather, I said. A what? A sight draft. He has to pay or I go to jail. Mr. Cunningham at the bank does it. I live by sight drafts. Can a grandfather jail a patriotic grandson who is dying that Italy may live? Live the American Garibaldi, said Rinaldi. Viva the sight drafts, I said. We must be quiet, said the major. Already we have been asked many times to be quiet. Do you go tomorrow really, Federico? He goes to the American hospital I tell you, Rinaldi said. To the beautiful nurses. Not the nurses with beards of the field hospital. Yes, yes, said the major, I know he goes to the American hospital. I don't mind their beards, I said. If any man wants to raise a beard let him. Why don't you raise a beard, Signor Maggiore? It could not go in a gas mask. Yes it could. Anything can go in a gas mask. I've vomited into a gas mask. Don't be so loud, baby, Rinaldi said. We all know you have been at the front Oh, you fine baby, what will I do while you are gone? We must go, said the major. This becomes sentimental. Listen, I have a surprise for you. Your English. You know? The English you go to see every night at their hospital?

She is going to Milan too. She goes with another to be at the American hospital. They had not got nurses yet from America. I talked to-day with the head of their riparto. They have too many women here at the front. They send some back. How do you like that, baby? All right. Yes? You go to live in a big city and have your English there to cuddle you. Why don't I get wounded? Maybe you will, I said. We must go, said the major. We drink and make noise and disturb Federico. Don't go. Yes, we must go. Goodbye. Good luck. Many things. Ciaou. Ciaou. Ciaou. Come back quickly, baby. Rinaldi kissed me. You smell of Lysol. Goodbye, baby. Goodbye. Many things. The major patted my shoulder. They tiptoed out. I found I was quite drunk but went to sleep.

The next day in the morning we left for Milan and arrived forty-eight hours later. It was a bad trip. We were sidetracked for a long time this side of Mestre and children came and peeked in. I got a little boy to go for a bottle of cognac but he came back and said he could only get grappa. I told him to get it and when it came I gave him the change and the man beside me and I got drunk and slept until past Vicenza where I woke up and was very sick on the floor. It did not matter because the man on that side had been very sick on the floor several times before. Afterward I thought I could not stand the thirst and in the yards outside of Verona I called to a soldier who was walking up and down beside the train and he got me a drink of water. I woke Georgetti, the other boy who was drunk, and offered him some water. He said to pour it on his shoulder and went back to sleep. The soldier would not take the penny I offered him and brought me a pulpy orange. I sucked on that and spit out the pith and watched the soldier pass up and down past a freight-car outside and after a while the train gave a jerk and started.

BOOK TWO

Chapter XIII

We got into Milan early in the morning and they unloaded us in the freight yard. An ambulance took me to the American hospital. Riding in the ambulance on a stretcher I could not tell what part of town we were passing through but when they unloaded the stretcher I saw a market-place and an open wine shop with a girl sweeping out. They were watering the street and it smelled of the early morning. They put the stretcher down and went in. The porter came out with them. He had gray mustaches, wore a doorman's cap and was in his shirt sleeves. The stretcher would not go into the elevator and they discussed whether it was better to lift me off the stretcher and go up in the elevator or carry the stretcher up the stairs. I listened to them discussing it. They decided on the elevator. They lifted me from the stretcher. "Go easy," I said. "Take it softly."

In the elevator we were crowded and as my legs bent the pain was very bad. "Straighten out the legs," I said.

"We can't, Signor Tenente. There isn't room." The man who said this had his arm around me and my arm was around his neck. His breath came in my face metallic with garlic and red wine.

"Be gentle," the other man said.

"Son of a bitch who isn't gentle!"

"Be gentle I say," the man with my feet repeated.

I saw the doors of the elevator closed, and the grill shut and the fourth-floor button pushed by the porter. The porter looked worried. The elevator rose slowly.

"Heavy?" asked the man with the garlic.

"Nothing," he said. His face was sweating and he grunted. The

elevator rose steadily and stopped. The man holding the feet opened the door and stepped out. We were on a balcony. There were several doors with brass knobs. The man carrying the feet pushed a button that rang a bell. We heard it inside the doors. No one came. Then the porter came up the stairs.

"Where are they?" the stretcher-bearers asked.

"I don't know," said the porter. "They sleep down stairs."

"Get somebody."

The porter rang the bell, then knocked on the door, then he opened the door and went in. When he came back there was an elderly woman wearing glasses with him. Her hair was loose and half-falling and she wore a nurse's dress.

"I can't understand," she said. "I can't understand Italian."

"I can speak English," I said. "They want to put me somewhere."

"None of the rooms are ready. There isn't any patient expected." She tucked at her hair and looked at me near-sightedly.

"Show them any room where they can put me."

"I don't know," she said. "There's no patient expected. I couldn't put you in just any room."

"Any room will do," I said. Then to the porter in Italian, "Find an empty room."

"They are all empty," said the porter. "You are the first patient." He held his cap in his hand and looked at the elderly nurse.

"For Christ's sweet sake take me to some room." The pain had gone on and on with the legs bent and I could feel it going in and out of the bone. The porter went in the door, followed by the gray-haired woman, then came hurrying back. "Follow me," he said. They carried me down a long hallway and into a room with drawn blinds. It smelled of new furniture. There was a bed and a big wardrobe with a mirror. They laid me down on the bed.

"l can't put on sheets," the woman said. "The sheets are locked up."

I did not speak to her. "There is money in my pocket," I said to

the porter. “In the buttoned-down pocket.” The porter took out the money. The two stretcher-bearers stood beside the bed holding their caps. “Give them five lire apiece and five lire for yourself. My papers are in the other pocket. You may give them to the nurse.”

The stretcher-bearers saluted and said thank you. “Goodbye,” I said. “And many thanks.” They saluted again and went out.

“Those papers,” I said to the nurse, “describe my case and the treatment already given.”

The woman picked them up and looked at them through her glasses. There were three papers and they were folded. “I don’t know what to do,” she said. “I can’t read Italian. I can’t do anything without the doctor’s orders.” She commenced to cry and put the papers in her apron pocket. “Are you an American?” she asked crying.

“Yes. Please put the papers on the table by the bed.”

It was dim and cool in the room. As I lay on the bed I could see the big mirror on the other side of the room but could not see what it reflected. The porter stood by the bed. He had a nice face and was very kind.

“You can go,” I said to him. “You can go too,” I said to the nurse. “What is your name?”

“Mrs. Walker.”

“You can go, Mrs. Walker. I think I will go to sleep.”

I was alone in the room. It was cool and did not smell like a hos pita!. The mattress was firm and comfortable and I lay without moving, hardly breathing, happy in feeling the pain lessen. After a while I wanted a drink of water and found the bell on a cord by the bed and rang it but nobody came. I went to sleep.

When I woke I looked around. There was sunlight coming in through the shutters. I saw the big armoire, the bare walls, and two chairs. My legs in the dirty bandages, stuck straight out in the bed. I was careful not to move them. I was thirsty and I reached for the bell and pushed the button. I heard the door open and looked and it

was a nurse. She looked young and pretty.

"Good-morning," I said.

"Good-morning," she said and came over to the bed. "We haven't been able to get the doctor. He's gone to Lake Como. No one knew there was a patient coming. What's wrong with you anyway?"

"I'm wounded. In the legs and feet and my head is hurt."

"What's your name?"

"Henry. Frederic Henry."

"I'll wash you up. But we can't do anything to the dressings until the doctor comes."

"Is Miss Barkley here?"

"No. There's no one by that name here."

"Who was the woman who cried when I came in?"

The nurse laughed. "That's Mrs. Walker. She was on night duty and she'd been asleep. She wasn't expecting anyone."

While we were talking she was undressing me, and when I was undressed, except for the bandages, she washed me, very gently and smoothly. The washing felt very good. There was a bandage on my head but she washed all around the edge.

"Where were you wounded?"

"On the Isonze north of Plava."

"Where is that?"

"North of Gorizia."

I could see that none of the places meant anything to her.

"Do you have a lot of pain?"

"No. Not much now."

She put a thermometer in my mouth.

"The Italians put it under the arm," I said.

"Don't talk."

When she took the thermometer out she read it and then shook it.

"What's the temperature?"

“You’re not supposed to know that.”

“Tell me what it is.”

“It’s almost normal.”

“I never have any fever. My legs are full of old iron too.”

“What do you mean?”

“They’re full of trench-mortar fragments, old screws and bedsprings and things.”

She shook her head and smiled.

“If you had any foreign bodies in your legs they would set up an inflammation and you’d have fever.”

“All right,” I said. “We’ll see what comes out.”

She went out of the room and came back with the old nurse of the early morning. Together they made the bed with me in it. That was new to me and an admirable proceeding.

“Who is in charge here?”

“Miss Van Campen.”

“How many nurses are there?”

“Just us two.”

“Won’t there be more?”

“Some more are coming.”

“When will they get here?”

“I don’t know. You ask a great many questions for a sick boy.”

“I’m not sick,” I said. “I’m wounded.”

They had finished making the bed and I lay with a clean smooth sheet under me and another sheet over me. Mrs. Walker went out and came back with a pajama jacket. They put that on me and I felt very clean and dressed.

“You’re awfully nice to me,” I said. The nurse called Miss Gage giggled. “Could I have a drink of water?” I asked.

“Certainly. Then you can have breakfast.”

“I don’t want breakfast. Can I have the shutters opened please?”

The light had been dim in the room and when the shutters were opened it was bright sunlight and I looked out on a balcony and

beyond were the tile roofs of houses and chimneys. I looked out over the tiled roofs and saw white clouds and the sky very blue.

"Don't you know when the other nurses are coming?"

"Why? Don't we take good care of you?"

"You're very nice."

"Would you like to use the bedpan?"

"I might try."

They helped me and held me up but it was not any use. Afterward I lay and looked out the open doors onto the balcony.

"When does the doctor come?"

"When he gets back. We've tried to telephone to Lake Como for him."

"Aren't there any other doctors?"

"He's the doctor for the hospital."

Miss Gage brought a pitcher of water and a glass. I drank three glasses and then they left me and I looked out the window a while and went back to sleep. I ate some lunch and in the afternoon Miss Van Campen, the superintendent, came up to see me. She did not like me and I did not like her. She was small and neatly suspicious and too good for her position. She asked many questions and seemed to think it was somewhat disgraceful that I was with the Italians.

"Can I have wine with the meals?" I asked her.

"Only if the doctor prescribes it."

"I can't have it until he comes?"

"Absolutely not."

"You plan on having him come eventually?"

"We've telephoned him at Lake Como."

She went out and Miss Gage came back.

"Why were you rude to Miss Van Campen?" she asked after she had done something for me very skilfully.

"I didn't mean to be. But she was snooty."

"She said you were domineering and rude."

"I wasn't. But what's the idea of a hospital without a doctor?"

"He's coming. They've telephoned for him to Lake Como."

"What does he do there? Swim?"

"No. He has a clinic there."

"Why don't they get another doctor?"

"Hush. Hush. Be a good boy and he'll come."

I sent for the porter and when he came I told him in Italian to get me a bottle of Cinzano at the wine shop, a fiasco of chianti and the evening papers. He went away and brought them wrapped in newspaper, unwrapped them and, when I asked him to, drew the corks and put the wine and vermouth under the bed. They left me alone and I lay in bed and read the papers awhile, the news from the front, and the list of dead officers with their decorations and then reached down and brought up the bottle of Cinzano and held it straight up on my stomach, the cool glass against my stomach, and took little drinks making rings on my stomach from holding the bottle there between drinks, and watched it get dark outside over the roofs of the town. The swallows circled around and I watched them and the night-hawks flying above the roofs and drank the Cinzano. Miss Gage brought up a glass with some eggnog in it. I lowered the vermouth bottle to the other side of the bed when she came in.

"Miss Van Campen had some sherry put in this," she said. "You shouldn't be rude to her. She's not young and this hospital is a big responsibility for her. Mrs. Walker's too old and she's no use to her."

"She's a splendid woman," I said. "Thank her very much."

"I'm going to bring your supper right away."

"That's all right," I said. "I'm not hungry."

When she brought the tray and put it on the bed table I thanked her and ate a little of the supper. Afterward it was dark outside and I could see the beams of the search-lights moving in the sky. I watched for a while and then went to sleep. I slept heavily except

once I woke sweating and scared and then went back to sleep trying to stay outside of my dream. I woke for good long before it was light and heard roosters crowing and stayed on awake until it began to be light. I was tired and once it was really light I went back to sleep again.

Chapter XIV

It was bright sunlight in the room when I woke. I thought I was back at the front and stretched out in bed. My legs hurt me and I looked down at them still in the dirty bandages, and seeing them knew where I was. I reached up for the bell-cord and pushed the button. I heard it buzz down the hall and then someone coming on rubber soles along the hall. It was Miss Gage and she looked a little older in the bright sunlight and not so pretty.

"Good-morning," she said. "Did you have a good night?"

"Yes. Thanks very much," I said. "Can I have a barber?"

"I came in to see you and you were asleep with this in the bed with you."

She opened the armoire door and held up the vermouth bottle. It was nearly empty. "I put the other bottle from under the bed in there too," she said. "Why didn't you ask me for a glass?"

"I thought maybe you wouldn't let me have it."

"I'd have had some with you."

"You're a fine girl."

"It isn't good for you to drink alone," she said. "You mustn't do it."

"All right."

"Your friend Miss Barkley's come," she said.

"Really?"

"Yes. I don't like her."

"You will like her. She's awfully nice."

She shook her head. "I'm sure she's fine. Can you move just a little to this side? That's fine. I'll clean you up for breakfast." She

washed me with a cloth and soap and warm water. “Hold your shoulder up,” she said. “That’s fine.”

“Can I have the barber before breakfast?”

“I’ll send the porter for him.” She went out and came back.

“He’s gone for him,” she said and dipped the cloth she held in the basin of water.

The barber came with the porter. He was a man of about fifty with an upturned mustache. Miss Gage was finished with me and went out and the barber lathered my face and shaved. He was very solemn and refrained from talking.

“What’s the matter? Don’t you know any news?” I asked.

“What news?”

“Any news. What’s happened in the town?”

“It is time of war,” he said. “The enemy’s ears are everywhere.”

I looked up at him. “Please hold your face still,” he said and went on shaving. “I will tell nothing.”

“What’s the matter with you?” I asked.

“I am an Italian. I will not communicate with the enemy.”

I let it go at that. If he was crazy, the sooner I could get out from under the razor the better. Once I tried to get a good look at him. “Beware,” he said. “The razor is sharp.”

I paid him when it was over and tipped him half a lira. He returned the coins.

“I will not. I am not at the front. But I am an Italian.”

“Get the hell out of here.”

“With your permission,” he said and wrapped his razors in newspaper. He went out leaving the five copper coins on the table beside the bed. I rang the bell. Miss Gage came in. “Would you ask the porter to come please?”

“All right.”

The porter came in. He was trying to keep from laughing.

“Is that barber crazy?”

“No, signorino. He made a mistake. He doesn’t understand very

well and he thought I said you were an Austrian officer."

"Oh," I said.

"Ho ho ho," the porter laughed. "He was funny. One move from you he said and he would have—" he drew his forefinger across his throat.

"Ho ho ho," he tried to keep from laughing. "When I tell him you were not an Austrian. Ho ho ho."

"Ho ho ho," I said bitterly. "How funny if he would cut my throat. Ho ho ho."

"No, signorino. No, no. He was so frightened of an Austrian. Ho ho ho."

"Ho ho ho," I said. "Get out of here."

He went out and I heard him laughing in the hall. I heard someone coming down the hallway. I looked toward the door. It was Catherine Barkley.

She came in the room and over to the bed.

"Hello, darling," she said. She looked fresh and young and very beautiful. I thought I had never seen anyone so beautiful.

"Hello," I said. When I saw her I was in love with her. Everything turned over inside of me. She looked toward the door, saw there was no one, then she sat on the side of the bed and leaned over and kissed me. I pulled her down and kissed her and felt her heart beating.

"You sweet," I said. "Weren't you wonderful to come here?"

"It wasn't very hard. It may be hard to stay."

"You've got to stay," I said. "Oh, you're wonderful." I was crazy about her. I could not believe she was really there and held her tight to me.

"You mustn't," she said. "You're not well enough."

"Yes, I am. Come on."

"No. You're not strong enough."

"Yes. I am. Yes. Please."

"You do love me?"

“I really love you. I’m crazy about you. Come on please.”

“Feel our hearts beating.”

“I don’t care about our hearts. I want you. I’m just mad about you.”

“You really love me?”

“Don’t keep on saying that. Come on. Please. Please, Catherine. “

“All right but only for a minute.”

“All right,” I said. “Shut the door.”

“You can’t. You shouldn’t.”

“Come on. Don’t talk. Please come on.”

Catherine sat in a chair by the bed. The door was open into the hall. The wildness was gone and I felt finer than I had ever felt.

She asked, “Now do you believe I love you?”

“Oh, you’re lovely,” I said. “You’ve got to stay. They can’t send you away. I’m crazy in love with you.”

“We’ll have to be awfully careful. That was just madness. We can’t do that.”

“We can at night.”

“We’ll have to be awfully careful. You’ll have to be careful in front of other people.”

“I will.”

“You’ll have to be. You’re sweet. You do love me, don’t you?”

“Don’t say that again. You don’t know what that does to me.”

“I’ll be careful then. I don’t want to do anything more to you. I have to go now, darling, really.”

“Come back right away.”

“I’ll come when I can.”

“Goodbye.”

“Goodbye, sweet.”

She went out. God knows I had not wanted to fall in love with her. I had not wanted to fall in love with anyone. But God knows I had and I lay on the bed in the room of the hospital in Milan and all sorts of things went through my head but I felt wonderful and

finally Miss Gage came in.

"The doctor's coming," she said. "He telephoned from Lake Como."

"When does he get here?"

"He'll be here this afternoon."

Chapter XV

Nothing happened until afternoon. The doctor was a thin quiet little man who seemed disturbed by the war. He took out a number of small steel splinters from my thighs with delicate and refined distaste. He used a local anesthetic called something or other "snow," which froze the tissue and avoided pain until the probe, the scalpel or the forceps got below the frozen portion. The anaesthetized area was clearly defined by the patient and after a time the doctor's fragile delicacy was exhausted and he said it would be better to have an X-ray. Probing was unsatisfactory, he said.

The X-ray was taken at the Ospedale Maggiore and the doctor who did it was excitable, efficient and cheerful. It was arranged by holding up the shoulders, that the patient should see personally some of the larger foreign bodies through the machine. The plates were to be sent over. The doctor requested me to write in his pocket notebook, my name, and regiment and some sentiment. He declared that the foreign bodies were ugly, nasty, brutal. The Austrians were sons of bitches. How many had I killed? I had not killed any but I was anxious to please—and I said I had killed plenty. Miss Gage was with me and the doctor put his arm around her and said she was more beautiful than Cleopatra. Did she understand that? Cleopatra the former queen of Egypt. Yes, by God she was. We returned to the little hospital in the ambulance and after a while and much lifting I was upstairs and in bed again. The plates came that afternoon, the doctor had said by God he would have them that afternoon and he did. Catherine Barkley showed them to me. They

were in red envelopes and she took them out of the envelopes and held them up to the light and we both looked.

"That's your right leg," she said, then put the plate back in the envelope. "This is your left."

"Put them away," I said, "and come over to the bed."

"I can't," she said. "I just brought them in for a second to show you."

She went out and I lay there. It was a hot afternoon and I was sick of lying in bed. I sent the porter for the papers, all the papers he could get.

Before he came back three doctors came into the room. I have noticed that doctors who fail in the practice of medicine have a tendency to seek one another's company and aid in consultation. A doctor who cannot take out your appendix properly will recommend to you a doctor who will be unable to remove your tonsils with success. These were three such doctors.

"This is the young man," said the house doctor with the delicate hands.

"How do you do?" said the tall gaunt doctor with the beard. The third doctor, who carried the X-ray plates in their red envelopes, said nothing.

"Remove the dressings?" questioned the bearded doctor.

"Certainly. Remove the dressings, please, nurse," the house doctor said to Miss Gage. Miss Gage removed the dressings. I looked down at the legs. At the field hospital they had the look of not too freshly ground hamburger steak. Now they were crusted and the knee was swollen and discolored and the calf sunken but there was no pus.

"Very clean," said the house doctor. "Very clean and nice."

"Urn," said the doctor with the beard. The third doctor looked over the house doctor's shoulder.

"Please move the knee," said the bearded doctor.

"I can't."

“Test the articulation?” the bearded doctor questioned. He had a stripe beside the three stars on his sleeve. That meant he was a first captain.

“Certainly,” the house doctor said. Two of them took hold of my right leg very gingerly and bent it.

“That hurts,” I said.

“Yes. Yes. A little further, doctor.”

“That’s enough. That’s as far as it goes,” I said.

“Partial articulation,” said the first captain. He straightened up. “May I see the plates again, please, doctor?” The third doctor handed him one of the plates. “No. The left leg, please.”

“That is the left leg, doctor.”

“You are right. I was looking from a different angle.” He returned the plate. The other plate he examined for some time. “You see, doctor?” he pointed to one of the foreign bodies which showed spherical and clear against the light. They examined the plate for some time.

“Only one thing I can say,” the first captain with the beard said. “It is a question of time. Three months, six months probably.”

“Certainly the synovial fluid must re-form.”

“Certainly. It is a question of time. I could not conscientiously open a knee like that before the projectile was encysted.”

“I agree with you, doctor.”

“Six months for what?” I asked.

“Six months for the projectile to encyst before the knee can be opened safely.”

“I don’t believe it,” I said.

“Do you want to keep your knee, young man?”

“No,” I said.

“What?”

“I want it cut off,” I said, “so I can wear a hook on it.”

“What do you mean? A hook?”

“He is joking,” said the house doctor. He patted my shoulder

very delicately. “He wants to keep his knee. This is a very brave young man. He has been proposed for the silver medal of valor.”

“All my felicitations,” said the first captain. He shook my hand. “I can only say that to be on the safe side you should wait at least six months before opening such a knee. You are welcome of course to another opinion.”

“Thank you very much,” I said. “I value your opinion.”

The first captain looked at his watch.

“We must go,” he said. “All my best wishes.”

“All my best wishes and many thanks,” I said. I shook hands with the third doctor. “Capitano Varini—Tenente Enry,” and they all three went out of the room.

“Miss Gage,” I called. She came in. “Please ask the house doctor to come back a minute.”

He came in holding his cap and stood by the bed. “Did you wish to see me?”

“Yes. I can’t wait six months to be operated on. My God, doctor, did you ever stay in bed six months?”

“You won’t be in bed all the time. You must first have the wounds exposed to the sun. Then afterward you can be on crutches.”

“For six months and then have an operation?”

“That is the safe way. The foreign bodies must be allowed to encyst and the synovial fluid will re-form. Then it will be safe to open up the knee.”

“Do you really think yourself I will have to wait that long?”

“That is the safe way.”

“Who is that first captain?”

“He is a very excellent surgeon of Milan.”

“He’s a first captain, isn’t he?”

“Yes, but he is an excellent surgeon.”

“I don’t want my leg fooled with by a first captain. If he was any good he would be made a major. I know what a first captain is,

doctor."

"He is an excellent surgeon and I would rather have his judgment than any surgeon I know."

"Could another surgeon see it?"

"Certainly if you wish. But I would take Dr. Varella's opinion myself."

"Could you ask another surgeon to come and see it?"

"I will ask Valentini to come."

"Who is he?"

"He is a surgeon of the Ospedale Maggiore."

"Good. I appreciate it very much. You understand, doctor, I couldn't stay in bed six months."

"You would not be in bed. You would first take a sun cure. Then you could have light exercise. Then when it was encysted we would operate."

"But I can't wait six months."

The doctor spread his delicate fingers on the cap he held and smiled. "You are in such a hurry to get back to the front?"

"Why not?"

"It is very beautiful," he said. "You are a noble young man." He stooped over and kissed me very delicately on the forehead. "I will send for Valentini. Do not worry and excite yourself. Be a good boy."

"Will you have a drink?" I asked.

"No thank you. I never drink alcohol."

"Just have one." I rang for the porter to bring glasses.

"No. No thank you. They are waiting for me."

"Goodbye," I said.

"Goodbye."

Two hours later Dr. Valentini came into the room. He was in a great hurry and the points of his mustache stood straight up. He was a major, his face was tanned and he laughed all the time.

"How did you do it, this rotten thing?" he asked. "Let me see the

plates. Yes. Yes. That's it. You look healthy as a goat. Who's the pretty girl? Is she your girl? I thought so. Isn't this a bloody war? How does that feel? You are a fine boy. I'll make you better than new. Does that hurt? You bet it hurts. How they love to hurt you, these doctors. What have they done for you so far? Can't that girl talk Italian? She should learn. What a lovely girl. I could teach her. I will be a patient here myself. No, but I will do all your maternity work free. Does she understand that? She will make you a fine boy. A fine blonde like she is. That's fine. That's all right. What a lovely girl. Ask her if she eats supper with me. No I won't take her away from you. Thank you. Thank you very much, Miss. That's all."

"That's all I want to know." He patted me on the shoulder. "Leave the dressings off."

"Will you have a drink, Dr. Valentini?"

"A drink? Certainly. I will have ten drinks. Where are they?"

"In the armoire. Miss Barkley will get the bottle."

"Cheery oh. Cheery oh to you, Miss. What a lovely girl. I will bring you better cognac than that." He wiped his mustache.

"When do you think it can be operated on?"

"Tomorrow morning. Not before. Your stomach must be emptied. You must be washed out. I will see the old lady downstairs and leave instructions. Goodbye. I see you tomorrow. I'll bring you better cognac than that. You are very comfortable here. Goodbye. Until tomorrow. Get a good sleep. I'll see you early." He waved from the doorway, his mustaches went straight up, his brown face was smiling. There was a star in a box on his sleeve because he was a major.

Chapter XVI

That night a bat flew into the room through the open door that led onto the balcony and through which we watched the night over the roofs of the town. It was dark in our room except for the small light of the night over the town and the bat was not frightened but hunted in the room as though he had been outside. We lay and watched him and I do not think he saw us because we lay so still. After he went out we saw a searchlight come on and watched the beam move across the sky and then go off and it was dark again. A breeze came in the night and we heard the men of the anti-aircraft gun on the next roof talking. It was cool and they were putting on their capes. I worried in the night about someone coming up but Catherine said they were all asleep. Once in the night we went to sleep and when I woke she was not there but I heard her coming along the hall and the door opened and she came back to the bed and said it was all right she had been downstairs and they were all asleep. She had been outside Miss Van Campen's door and heard her breathing in her sleep. She brought crackers and we ate them and drank some vermouth. We were very hungry but she said that would all have to be gotten out of me in the morning. I went to sleep again in the morning when it was light and when I was awake I found she was gone again. She came in looking fresh and lovely and sat on the bed and the sun rose while I had the thermometer in my mouth and we smelled the dew on the roofs and then the coffee of the men at the gun on the next roof.

"I wish we could go for a walk," Catherine said. "I'd wheel you if we had a chair."

“How would I get into the chair?”

“We’d do it.”

“We could go out to the park and have breakfast outdoors.” I looked out the open doorway.

“What we’ll really do,” she said, “is get you ready for your friend Dr. Valentini.”

“I thought he was grand.”

“I didn’t like him as much as you did. But I imagine he’s very good.”

“Come back to bed, Catherine. Please,” I said. “I can’t. Didn’t we have a lovely night?”

“And can you be on night duty tonight?”

“I probably will. But you won’t want me.”

“Yes, I will”

“No, you won’t. You’ve never been operated on. You don’t know how you’ll be.”

“I’ll be all right.”

“You’ll be sick and I won’t be anything to you.”

“Come back then now.”

“No,” she said. “I have to do the chart, darling, and fix you up.”

“You don’t really love me or you’d come back again.”

“You’re such a silly boy.” She kissed me. “That’s all right for the chart. Your temperature’s always normal. You’ve such a lovely temperature. “

“You’ve got a lovely everything.”

“Oh no. You have the lovely temperature. I’m awfully proud of your temperature.”

“Maybe all our children will have fine temperatures.”

“Our children will probably have beastly temperatures.”

“What do you have to do to get me ready for Valentini?”

“Not much. But quite unpleasant.”

“I wish you didn’t have to do it.”

“I don’t. I don’t want anyone else to touch you. I’m silly. I get

furious if they touch you."

"Even Ferguson?"

"Especially Ferguson and Gage and the other, what's her name?"

"Walker?"

"That's it. They've too many nurses here now. There must be some more patients or they'll send us away. They have four nurses now. "

"Perhaps there'll be some. They need that many nurses. It's quite a big hospital."

"I hope some will come. What would I do if they sent me away? They will unless there are more patients."

"I'd go too."

"Don't be silly. You can't go yet. But get well quickly, darling, and we will go somewhere."

"And then what?"

"Maybe the war will be over. It can't always go on."

"I'll get well," I said. "Valentini will fix me."

"He should with those mustaches. And, darling, when you're going under the ether just think about something else—not us. Because people get very blab by under an anesthetic."

"What should I think about?"

"Anything. Anything but us. Think about your people. Or even any other girl."

"No."

"Say your prayers then. That ought to create a splendid impression. "

"Maybe I won't talk."

"That's true. Often people don't talk."

"I won't talk."

"Don't brag, darling. Please don't brag. You're so sweet and you don't have to brag."

"I won't talk a word."

"Now you're bragging, darling. You know you don't need to

brag. Just start your prayers or poetry or something when they tell you to breathe deeply. You'll be lovely that way and I'll be so proud of you. I'm very proud of you anyway. You have such a lovely temperature and you sleep like a little boy with your arm around the pillow and think it's me. Or is it some other girl? Some fine Italian girl?"

"It's you."

"Of course it's me. Oh I do love you and Valentini will make you a fine leg. I'm glad I don't have to watch it."

"And you'll be on night duty tonight."

"Yes. But you won't care."

"You wait and see."

"There, darling. Now you're all clean inside and out. Tell me. How many people have you ever loved?"

"Nobody."

"Not me even?"

"Yes, you."

"How many others really?"

"None."

"How many have you—how do you say it?—stayed with?"

"None."

"You're lying to me."

"Yes."

"It's all right. Keep right on lying to me. That's what I want you to do. Were they pretty?"

"I never stayed with anyone."

"That's right. Were they very attractive?"

"I don't know anything about it."

"You're just mine. That's true and you've never belonged to anyone else. But I don't care if you have. I'm not afraid of them. But don't tell me about them. When a man stays with a girl when does she say how much it costs?"

"I don't know."

“Of course not. Does she say she loves him? Tell me that. I want to know that.”

“Yes. If he wants her to.”

“Does he say he loves her? Tell me please. It’s important.”

“He does if he wants to.”

“But you never did? Really?”

“No.”

“Not really. Tell me the truth.”

“No,” I lied.

“You wouldn’t,” she said. “I knew you wouldn’t. Oh, I love you, darling.”

Outside the sun was up over the roofs and I could see the points of the cathedral with the sunlight on them. I was clean inside and outside and waiting for the doctor.

“And that’s it?” Catherine said. “She says just what he wants her to?”

“Not always.”

“But I will. I’ll say just what you wish and I’ll do what you wish and then you will never want any other girls, will you?” She looked at me very happily. “I’ll do what you want and say what you want and then I’ll be a great success, won’t I?”

“Yes.”

“What would you like me to do now that you’re all ready?”

“Come to the bed again.”

“All right. I’ll come.”

“Oh, darling, darling, darling,” I said.

“You see,” she said. “I do anything you want.”

“You’re so lovely.”

“I’m afraid I’m not very good at it yet.”

“You’re lovely.”

“I want what you want. There isn’t any me anymore. Just what you want.”

“You sweet.”

“I’m good. Aren’t I good? You don’t want any other girls, do you?”

“No.”

“You see? I’m good. I do what you want.”

Chapter XVII

When I was awake after the operation I had not been away. You do not go away. They only choke you. It is not like dying it is just a chemical choking so you do not feel, and afterward you might as well have been drunk except that when you throw up nothing comes but bile and you do not feel better afterward. I saw sandbags at the end of the bed. They were on pipes that came out of the cast. After a while I saw Miss Gage and she said, "How is it now?"

"Better," I said.

"He did a wonderful job on your knee."

"How long did it take?"

"Two hours and a half."

"Did I say anything silly?"

"Not a thing. Don't talk. Just be quiet."

I was sick and Catherine was right. It did not make any difference who was on night duty.

There were three other patients in the hospital now, a thin boy in the Red Cross from Georgia with malaria, a nice boy, also thin, from New York, with malaria and jaundice, and a fine boy who had tried to unscrew the fuse-cap from a combination shrapnel and high explosive shell for a souvenir. This was a shrapnel shell used by the Austrians in the mountains with a nose-cap which went on after the burst and exploded on contact.

Catherine Barkley was greatly liked by the nurses because she would do night duty indefinitely. She had quite a little work with the malaria people, the boy who had unscrewed the nose-cap was a friend of ours and never rang at night, unless it was necessary but

between the times of working we were together. I loved her very much and she loved me. I slept in the daytime and we wrote notes during the day when we were awake and sent them by Ferguson. Ferguson was a fine girl. I never learned anything about her except that she had a brother in the Fifty-Second Division and a brother in Mesopotamia and she was very good to Catherine Barkley.

"Will you come to our wedding, Fergy?" I said to her once.

"You'll never get married."

"We will."

"No you won't."

"Why not?"

"You'll fight before you'll marry."

"We never fight."

''You've time yet."

"We don't fight."

"You'll die then. Fight or die. That's what people do. They don't marry."

I reached for her hand. "Don't take hold of me," she said. "I'm not crying. Maybe you'll be all right you two. But watch out you don't get her in trouble. You get her in trouble and I'll kill you."

"I won't get her in trouble."

"Well watch out then. I hope you'll be all right. You have a good time."

"We have a fine time."

"Don't fight then and don't get her into trouble."

"I won't."

"Mind you watch out. I don't want her with any of these war babies."

"You're a fine girl, Fergy."

"I'm not. Don't try to flatter me. How does your leg feel?"

"Fine."

"How is your head?" She touched the top of it with her fingers. It was sensitive like a foot that had gone to sleep. "It's never

bothered me."

"A bump like that could make you crazy. It never bothers you?"

"No."

"You're a lucky young man. Have you the letter done? I'm going down."

"It's here," I said.

"You ought to ask her not to do night duty for a while. She's getting very tired."

"All right. I will."

"I want to do it but she won't let me. The others are glad to let her have it. You might give her just a little rest."

"All right."

"Miss Van Campen spoke about you sleeping all the forenoons."

"She would."

"It would be better if you let her stay off nights a little while."

"I want her to."

''You do not. But if you would make her I'd respect you for it."

"I'll make her."

"I don't believe it." She took the note and went out. I rang the bell and in a little while Miss Gage came in.

"What's the matter?"

"I just wanted to talk to you. Don't you think Miss Barkley ought to go off night duty for a while? She looks awfully tired. Why does she stay on so long?"

Miss Gage looked at me.

"I'm a friend of yours," she said. "You don't have to talk to me like that."

"What do you mean?"

"Don't be silly. Was that all you wanted?"

"Do you want a vermouth?"

"All right. Then I have to go." She got out the bottle from the armoire and brought a glass.

"You take the glass," I said. "I'll drink out of the bottle."

“Here’s to you,” said Miss Gage.

“What did Van Campen say about me sleeping late in the mornings?”

“She just jawed about it. She calls you our privileged patient.”

“To hell with her.”

“She isn’t mean,” Miss Gage said. “She’s just old and cranky. She never liked you.”

“No.”

“Well, I do. And I’m your friend. Don’t forget that.”

“You’re awfully damned nice.”

“No. I know who you think is nice. But I’m your friend. How does your leg feel?”

“Fine.”

“I’ll bring some cold mineral water to pour over it. It must itch under the cast. It’s hot outside.”

“You’re awful nice.”

“Does it itch much?”

“No. It’s fine.”

“I’ll fix those sandbags better.” She leaned over. “I’m your friend.”

“I know you are.

“No you don’t. But you will some day.”

Catherine Barkley took three nights off night duty and then she came back on again. It was as though we met again after each of us had been away on a long journey.

Chapter XVIII

We had a lovely time that summer. When I could go out we rode in a carriage in the park. I remember the carriage, the horse going slowly, and up ahead the back of the driver with his varnished high hat, and Catherine Barkley sitting beside me. If we let our hands touch, just the side of my hand touching hers, we were excited. Afterward when I could get around on crutches we went to dinner at Biffi's or the Gran Italia and sat at the tables outside on the floor of the galleria. The waiters came in and out and there were people going by and candles with shades on the tablecloths and after we decided that we liked the Gran Italia best, George, the headwaiter, saved us a table. He was a fine waiter and we let him order the meal while we looked at the people, and the great galleria in the dusk, and each other. We drank dry white capri iced in a bucket; although we tried many of the other wines, fresa, barbera and the sweet white wines. They had no wine waiter because of the war and George would smile ashamedly when I asked about wines like fresa.

"If you imagine a country that makes a wine because it tastes like strawberries," he said.

"Why shouldn't it?" Catherine asked. "It sounds splendid."

"You try it, lady," said George, "if you want to. But let me bring a little bottle of margaux for the Tenente."

"I'll try it too, George."

"Sir, I can't recommend you to. It doesn't even taste like strawberries."

"It might," said Catherine. "It would be wonderful if it did."

"I'll bring it," said George, "and when the lady is satisfied I'll

take it away."

It was not much of a wine. As he said, it did not even taste like strawberries. We went back to capri. One evening I was short of money and George loaned me a hundred lire. "That's all right, Tenente," he said. "I know how it is. I know how a man gets short. If you or the lady need money I've always got money."

After dinner we walked through the galleria, past the other restaurants and the shops with their steel shutters down, and stopped at the little place where they sold sandwiches; ham and lettuce sandwiches and anchovy sandwiches made of very tiny brown glazed rolls and only about as long as your finger. They were to eat in the night when we were hungry. Then we got into an open carriage outside the galleria in front of the cathedral and rode to the hospital. At the door of the hospital the porter came out to help with the crutches. I paid the driver, and then we rode upstairs in the elevator. Catherine got off at the lower floor where the nurses lived and I went on up and went down the hall on crutches to my room; sometimes I undressed and got into bed and sometimes I sat out on the balcony with my leg up on another chair and watched the swallows over the roofs and waited for Catherine. When she came upstairs it was as though she had been away on a long trip and I went along the hall with her on the crutches and carried the basins and waited outside the doors, or went in with her; it depending on whether they were friends of ours or not, and when she had done all there was to be done we sat out on the balcony outside my room. Afterward I went to bed and when they were all asleep and she was sure they would not call she came in. I loved to take her hair down and she sat on the bed and kept very still, except suddenly she would dip down to kiss me while I was doing it, and I would take out the pins and lay them on the sheet and it would be loose and I would watch her while she kept very still and then take out the last two pins and it would all come down and she would drop her head and we would both be inside of it, and it was

the feeling of inside a tent or behind a falls.

She had wonderfully beautiful hair and I would lie sometimes and watch her twisting it up in the light that came in the open door and it shone even in the night as water shines sometimes just before it is really daylight. She had a lovely face and body and lovely smooth skin too. We would be lying together and I would touch her cheeks and her forehead and under her eyes and her chin and throat with the tips of my fingers and say, "Smooth as piano keys," and she would stroke my chin with her finger and say, "Smooth as emery paper and very hard on piano keys."

"Is it rough?"

"No, darling. I was just making fun of you."

It was lovely in the nights and if we could only touch each other we were happy. Besides all the big times we had many small ways of making love and we tried putting thoughts in the other one's head while we were in different rooms. It seemed to work sometimes but that was probably because we were thinking the same thing anyway.

We said to each other that we were married the first day she had come to the hospital and we counted months from our wedding day. I wanted to be really married but Catherine said that if we were they would send her away and if we merely started on the formalities they would watch her and would break us up. We would have to be married under Italian law and the formalities were terrific. I wanted us to be married really because I worried about having a child if I thought about it, but we pretended to ourselves we were married and did not worry much and I suppose I enjoyed not being married, really. I know one night we talked about it and Catherine said, "But, darling, they'd send me away."

"Maybe they wouldn't."

"They would. They'd send me home and then we would be apart until after the war."

"I'd come on leave."

“You couldn’t get to Scotland and back on a leave. Besides, I won’t leave you. What good would it do to marry now? We’re really married. I couldn’t be anymore married.”

“I only wanted to for you.”

“There isn’t any me. I’m you. Don’t make up a separate me.”

“I thought girls always wanted to be married.”

“They do. But, darling, I am married. I’m married to you. Don’t I make you a good wife?”

“You’re a lovely wife.”

“You see, darling, I had one experience of waiting to be married.”

“I don’t want to hear about it.”

“You know I don’t love anyone but you. You shouldn’t mind because someone else loved me.”

“I do.”

“You shouldn’t be jealous of someone who’s dead when you have everything.”

“No, but I don’t want to hear about it.”

“Poor darling. And I know you’ve been with all kinds of girls and it doesn’t matter to me.”

“Couldn’t we be married privately some way? Then if anything happened to me or if you had a child.”

“There’s no way to be married except by church or state. We are married privately. You see, darling, it would mean everything to me if I had any religion. But I haven’t any religion.”

“You gave me the Saint Anthony.”

“That was for luck. Someone gave it to me.”

“Then nothing worries you?”

“Only being sent away from you. You’re my religion. You’re all I’ve got.”

“All right. But I’ll marry you the day you say.”

“Don’t talk as though you had to make an honest woman of me darling. I’m a very honest woman. You can’t be ashamed of

something if you're only happy and proud of it. Aren't you happy?"

"But you won't ever leave me for someone else."

"No, darling. I won't ever leave you for someone else. I suppose all sorts of dreadful things will happen to us. But you don't have to worry about that."

"I don't. But I love you so much and you did love someone else before."

"And what happened to him?"

"He died."

"Yes and if he hadn't I wouldn't have met you. I'm not unfaithful, darling. I've plenty of faults but I'm very faithful. You'll be sick of me I'll be so faithful."

"I'll have to go back to the front pretty soon."

"We won't think about that until you go. You see I'm happy, darling, and we have a lovely time. I haven't been happy for a long time and when I met you perhaps I was nearly crazy. Perhaps I was crazy. But now we're happy and we love each other. Do let's please just be happy. You are happy, aren't you? Is there anything I do you don't like? Can I do anything to please you? Would you like me to take down my hair? Do you want to play?"

"Yes and come to bed."

"All right. I'll go and see the patients first."

Chapter XIX

The summer went that way. I do not remember much about the days, except that they were hot and that there were many victories in the papers. I was very healthy and my legs healed quickly so that it was not very long after I was first on crutches before I was through with them and walking with a cane. Then I started treatments at the Ospedale Maggiore for bending the knees, mechanical treatments, baking in a box of mirrors with violet rays, massage, and baths. I went over there afternoons and afterward stopped at the cafe and had a drink and read the papers. I did not roam around the town; but wanted to get home to the hospital from the cafe. All I wanted was to see Catherine. The rest of the time I was glad to kill. Mostly I slept in the mornings, and in the afternoons, sometimes, I went to the races, and late to the mechano-therapy treatments. Sometimes I stopped in at the Anglo-American Club and sat in a deep leather-cushioned chair in front of the window and read the magazines. They would not let us go out together when I was off crutches because it was unseemly for a nurse to be seen unchaperoned with a patient who did not look as though he needed attendance, so we were not together much in the afternoons. Although sometimes we could go out to dinner if Ferguson went along. Miss Van Campen had accepted the status that we were great friends because she got a great amount of work out of Catherine. She thought Catherine came from very good people and that prejudiced her in her favor finally. Miss Van Campen admired family very much and came from an excellent family herself. The hospital was quite busy, too, and that kept her

occupied. It was a hot summer and I knew many people in Milan but always was anxious to get back home to the hospital as soon as the afternoon was over. At the front they were advancing on the Carso, they had taken Kuk across from Plava and were taking the Bainsizza plateau. The West front did not sound so good. It looked as though the war were going on for a long time. We were in the war now but I thought it would take a year to get any great amount of troops over and train them for combat. Next year would be a bad year, or a good year maybe. The Italians were using up an awful amount of men. I did not see how it could go on. Even if they took all the Bainsizza and Monte San Gabriele there were plenty of mountains beyond for the Austrians. I had seen them. All the highest mountains were beyond. On the Carso they were going forward but there were marshes and swamps down by the sea. Napoleon would have whipped the Austrians on the plains. He never would have fought them in the mountains. He would have let them come down and whipped them around Verona. Still nobody was whipping anyone on the Western front. Perhaps wars weren't won anymore. Maybe they went on forever. Maybe it was another Hundred Years' War. I put the paper back on the rack and left the club. I went down the steps carefully and walked up the Via Manzoni. Outside the Gran Hotel I met old Meyers and his wife getting out of a carriage. They were coming back from the races. She was a big-busted woman in black satin. He was short and old, with a white mustache and walked flat-footed with a cane.

"How do you do? How do you do?" She shook hands. "Hello," said Meyers.

"How were the races?"

"Fine. They were just lovely. I had three winners."

"How did you do?" I asked Meyers.

"All right. I had a winner."

"I never know how he does," Mrs. Meyers said. "He never tells me. "

“I do all right,” Meyers said. He was being cordial. “You ought to come out.” While he talked you had the impression that he was not looking at you or that he mistook you for someone else.

“I will,” I said.

“I’m coming up to the hospital to see you,” Mrs. Meyers said. “I have some things for my boys. You’re all my boys. You certainly are my dear boys.”

“They’ll be glad to see you.”

“Those dear boys. You too. You’re one of my boys.”

“I have to get back,” I said.

“You give my love to all those dear boys. I’ve got lots of things to bring. I’ve some fine marsala and cakes.”

“Goodbye,” I said. “They’ll be awfully glad to see you.”

“Goodbye,” said Meyers. “You come around to the galleria. You know where my table is. We’re all there every afternoon.” I went on up the street. I wanted to buy something at the Cova to take to Catherine. Inside, at the Cova, I bought a box of chocolate and while the girl wrapped it up I walked over to the bar. There were a couple of British and some aviators. I had a martini alone, paid for it, picked up the box of chocolate at the outside counter and walked on home toward the hospital. Outside the little bar up the street from the Scala there were some people I knew, a vice-consul, two fellows who studied singing, and Ettore Moretti, an Italian from San Francisco who was in the Italian army. I had a drink with them. One of the singers was named Ralph Simmons, and he was singing under the name of Enrico DeiCredo. I never knew how well he could sing but he was always on the point of something very big happening. He was fat and looked shopworn around the nose and mouth as though he had hay fever. He had come back from singing in Piacenza. He had sung Tosca and it had been wonderful.

“Of course you’ve never heard me sing,” he said.

“When will you sing here?”

“I’ll be at the Scala in the fall.”

“I’ll bet they throw the benches at you,” Ettore said. “Did you hear how they threw the benches at him in Modena?”

“It’s a damned lie.”

“They threw the benches at him,” Ettore said. “I was there. threw six benches myself.”

“You’re just a wop from Frisco.”

“He can’t pronounce Italian,” Ettore said. “Everywhere he goes they throw the benches at him.”

“Piacenza’s the toughest house to sing in the north of Italy,” the other tenor said. “Believe me that’s a tough little house to sing.” This tenor’s name was Edgar Saunders, and he sang under the name of Edouardo Giovanni.

“I’d like to be there to see them throw the benches at you.” Ettore said. “You can’t sing Italian.”

“He’s a nut,” said Edgar Saunders. “All he knows how to say is throw benches.”

“That’s all they know how to do when you two sing,” Ettore said.

“Then when you go to America you’ll tell about your triumphs at the Scala. They wouldn’t let you get by the first note at the Scala.”

“I’ll sing at the Scala,” Simmons said. “I’m going to sing Tosca in October.”

“We’ll go, won’t we, Mac?” Ettore said to the vice-consul. “They’ll need somebody to protect them.”

“Maybe the American army will be there to protect them,” the vice-consul said. “Do you want another drink, Simmons? You want a drink, Saunders?”

“All right,” said Saunders.

“I hear you’re going to get the silver medal,” Ettore said to me. “What kind of citation you going to get?”

“I don’t know. I don’t know I’m going to get it.”

“You’re going to get it. Oh boy, the girls at the Cova will think

you're fine then. They'll all think you killed two hundred Austrians or captured a whole trench by yourself. Believe me, I got to work for my decorations."

"How many have you got, Ettore?" asked the vice-consul.

"He's got everything," Simmons said. "He's the boy they're running the war for."

"I've got the bronze twice and three silver medals," said Ettore. "But the papers on only one have come through."

"What's the matter with the others?" asked Simmons.

"The action wasn't successful," said Ettore. "When the action isn't successful they hold up all the medals."

"How many times have you been wounded, Ettore?"

"Three times bad. I got three wound stripes. See?" He pulled his sleeve around. The stripes were parallel silver lines on a black background sewed to the cloth of the sleeve about eight inches below the shoulder.

"You got one too," Ettore said to me. "Believe me they're fine to have. I'd rather have them than medals. Believe me, boy, when you get three you've got something. You only get one for a wound that puts you three months in the hospital."

"Where were you wounded, Ettore?" asked the vice-consul.

Ettore pulled up his sleeve. "Here," he showed the deep smooth red scar. "Here on my leg. I can't show you that because I got puttees on; and in the foot. There's dead bone in my foot that stinks right now. Every morning I take new little pieces out and it stinks all the time."

"What hit you?" asked Simmons.

"A hand-grenade. One of those potato mashers. It just blew the whole side of my foot off. You know those potato mashers?" He turned to me.

"Sure."

"I saw the son of a bitch throw it," Ettore said. "It knocked me down and I thought I was dead all right but those damn potato

mashers haven't got anything in them. I shot the son of a bitch with my rifle. I always carry a rifle so they can't tell I'm an officer."

"How did he look?" asked Simmons.

"That was the only one he had," Ettore said. "I don't know why he threw it. I guess he always wanted to throw one. He never saw any real fighting probably. I shot the son of a bitch all right."

"How did he look when you shot him?" Simmons asked.

"Hell, how should I know?" said Ettore. "I shot him in the belly. I was afraid I'd miss him if I shot him in the head."

"How long have you been an officer, Ettore?" I asked.

"Two years. I'm going to be a captain. How long have you been a lieutenant?"

"Going on three years."

"You can't be a captain because you don't know the Italian language well enough," Ettore said. "You can talk but you can't read and write well enough. You got to have an education to be a captain. Why don't you go in the American army?"

"Maybe I will."

"I wish to God I could. Oh, boy, how much does a captain get, Mac?"

"I don't know exactly. Around two hundred and fifty dollars, I think."

"Jesus Christ what I could do with two hundred and fifty dollars. You better get in the American army quick, Fred. See if you can't get me in."

"All right."

"I can command a company in Italian. I could learn it in English easy."

"You'd be a general," said Simmons.

"No, I don't know enough to be a general. A general's got to know a hell of a lot. You guys think there ain't anything to war. You ain't got brains enough to be a second-class corporal."

"Thank God I don't have to be," Simmons said.

“Maybe you will if they round up all you slackers. Oh, boy, I’d like to have you two in my platoon. Mac too. I’d make you my orderly, Mac.”

“You’re a great boy, Ettore,” Mac said. “But I’m afraid you’re a militarist.”

“I’ll be a colonel before the war’s over,” Ettore said.

“If they don’t kill you.”

“They won’t kill me.” He touched the stars at his collar with his thumb and forefinger. “See me do that? We always touch our stars if anybody mentions getting killed.”

“Let’s go, Sim,” said Saunders standing up.

“All right.”

“So long,” I said. “I have to go too.” It was a quarter to six by the clock inside the bar. “Ciaou, Ettore.”

“Ciaou, Fred,” said Ettore. “That’s pretty fine you’re going to get the silver medal.”

“I don’t know I’ll get it.”

‘’You’ll get it all right, Fred. I heard you were going to get it all right.”

“Well, so long,” I said. “Keep out of trouble, Ettore.”

“Don’t worry about me. I don’t drink and I don’t run around. I’m no boozer and whorehound. I know what’s good for me.”

“So long,” I said. “I’m glad you’re going to be promoted captain.”

“I don’t have to wait to be promoted. I’m going to be a captain for merit of war. You know. Three stars with the crossed swords and crown above. That’s me.”

“Good luck.”

“Good luck. When you going back to the front?”

“Pretty soon.”

“Well, I’ll see you around.”

“So long.”

“So long. Don’t take any bad nickels.”

I walked on down a back street that led to a cross-cut to the hospital. Ettore was twenty-three. He had been brought up by an uncle in San Francisco and was visiting his father and mother in Torino when war was declared. He had a sister, who had been sent to America with him at the same time to live with the uncle, who would graduate from normal school this year. He was a legitimate hero who bored everyone he met. Catherine could not stand him.

"We have heroes too," she said. "But usually, darling, they're much quieter."

"I don't mind him."

"I wouldn't mind him if he wasn't so conceited and didn't bore me, and bore me, and bore me."

" He bores me."

"You're sweet to say so, darling. But you don't need to. You can picture him at the front and you know he's useful but he's so much the type of boy I don't care for."

"I know."

"You're awfully sweet to know, and I try and like him but he's a dreadful, dreadful boy really."

"He said this afternoon he was going to be a captain."

"I'm glad," said Catherine. "That should please him."

"Wouldn't you like me to have some more exalted rank?"

"No, darling. I only want you to have enough rank so that we're admitted to the better restaurants."

"That's just the rank I have."

"You have a splendid rank. I don't want you to have any more rank. It might go to your head. Oh, darling, I'm awfully glad you're not conceited. I'd have married you even if you were conceited but it's very restful to have a husband who's not conceited."

We were talking softly out on the balcony. The moon was supposed to rise but there was a mist over the town and it did not come up and in a little while it started to drizzle and we came in. Outside the mist turned to rain and in a little while it was raining

hard and we heard it drumming on the roof. I got up and stood at the door to see if it was raining in but it wasn't, so I left the door open.

"Who else did you see?" Catherine asked.

"Mr. and Mrs. Meyers."

"They're a strange lot."

"He's supposed to have been in the penitentiary at home. They let him out to die."

"And he lived happily in Milan forever after."

"I don't know how happily."

"Happily enough after jail I should think."

"She's bringing some things here."

"She brings splendid things. Were you her dear boy?"

"One of them."

"You are all her dear boys," Catherine said. "She prefers the dear boys. Listen to it rain."

"It's raining hard."

"And you'll always love me, won't you?"

"Yes."

"And the rain won't make any difference?"

"No."

"That's good. Because I'm afraid of the rain."

"Why?" I was sleepy. Outside the rain was falling steadily.

"I don't know, darling. I've always been afraid of the rain."

"I like it."

"I like to walk in it. But it's very hard on loving."

"I'll love you always."

"I'll love you in the rain and in the snow and in the hail and—what else is there?"

"I don't know. I guess I'm sleepy."

"Go to sleep, darling, and I'll love you no matter how it is."

"You're not really afraid of the rain are you?"

"Not when I'm with you."

“Why are you afraid of it?”

“I don’t know.”

“Tell me.”

“Don’t make me.”

“Tell me.”

“No.”

“Tell me.”

“All right. I’m afraid of the rain because sometimes I see me dead in it.”

“No.”

“And sometimes I see you dead in it.”

“That’s more likely.”

“No, it’s not, darling. Because I can keep you safe. I know I can. But nobody can help themselves.”

“Please stop it. I don’t want you to get Scotch and crazy tonight. We won’t be together much longer.”

“No, but I am Scotch and crazy. But I’ll stop it. It’s all nonsense.”

“Yes it’s all nonsense.”

“It’s all nonsense. It’s only nonsense. I’m not afraid of the rain. I’m not afraid of the rain. Oh, oh, God, I wish I wasn’t.” She was crying. I comforted her and she stopped crying. But outside it kept on raining.

Chapter XX

One day in the afternoon we went to the races. Ferguson went too and Crowell Rodgers, the boy who had been wounded in the eyes by the explosion of the shell nose-cap. The girls dressed to go after lunch while Crowell and I sat on the bed in his room and read the past performances of the horses and the predictions in the racing paper. Crowell's head was bandaged and he did not care much about these races but read the racing paper constantly and kept track of all the horses for something to do. He said the horses were a terrible lot but they were all the horses we had. Old Meyers liked him and gave him tips. Meyers won on nearly every race but disliked to give tips because it brought down the prices. The racing was very crooked. Men who had been ruled off the turf everywhere else were racing in Italy. Meyers' information was good but I hated to ask him because sometimes he did not answer, and always you could see it hurt him to tell you, but he felt obligated to tell us for some reason and he hated less to tell Crowell. Crowell's eyes had been hurt, one was hurt badly, and Meyers had trouble with his eyes and so he liked Crowell. Meyers never told his wife what horses he was playing and she won or lost, mostly lost, and talked all the time.

We four drove out to San Siro in an open carriage. It was a lovely day and we drove out through the park and out along the tramway and out of town where the road was dusty. There were villas with iron fences and big overgrown gardens and ditches with water flowing and green vegetable gardens with dust on the leaves. We could look across the plain and see farmhouses and the rich

green farms with their irrigation ditches and the mountains to the north. There were many carriages going into the race track and the men at the gate let us in without cards because we were in uniform. We left the carriage, bought programmes, and walked across the infield and then across the smooth thick turf of the course to the paddock. The grandstands were old and made of wood and the betting booths were under the stands and in a row out near the stables. There was a crowd of soldiers along the fence in the infield. The paddock was fairly well filled with people and they were walking the horses around in a ring under the trees behind the grandstand. We saw people we knew and got chairs for Ferguson and Catherine and watched the horses.

They went around, one after the other, their heads down, the grooms leading them. One horse, a purplish black, Crowell swore was dyed that color. We watched him and it seemed possible. He had only come out just before the bell rang to saddle. We looked him up in the programme from the number on the groom's arm and it was listed a black gelding named Japalac. The race was for horses that had never won a race worth one thousand lire or more. Catherine was sure his color had been changed. Ferguson said she could not tell. I thought he looked suspicious. We all agreed we ought to back him and pooled one hundred lire. The odds sheets showed he would pay thirty-five to one. Crowell went over and bought the tickets while we watched the jockeys ride around once more and then go out under the trees to the track and gallop slowly up to the turn where the start was to be.

We went up in the grandstand to watch the race. They had no elastic barrier at San Siro then and the starter lined up all the horses, they looked very small way up the track, and then sent them off with a crack of his long whip. They came past us with the black horse well in front and on the turn he was running away from the others. I watched them on the far side with the glasses and saw the jockey fighting to hold him in but he could not hold him and when

they came around the turn and into the stretch the black horse was fifteen lengths ahead of the others. He went way on up and around the turn after the finish.

"Isn't it wonderful," Catherine said. "We'll have over three thousand lire. He must be a splendid horse."

"I hope his color doesn't run," Crowell said, "before they pay off."

"He was really a lovely horse," Catherine said. "I wonder if Mr. Meyers backed him."

"Did you have the winner?" I called to Meyers. He nodded.

"I didn't," Mrs. Meyers said. "Who did you children bet on?"

"Japalac."

"Really? He's thirty-five to one!"

"We liked his color."

"I didn't. I thought he looked seedy. They told me not to back him. "

"He won't pay much," Meyers said.

"He's marked thirty-five to one in the quotes," I said.

"He won't pay much. At the last minute," Meyers said, "they put a lot of money on him."

"Who?"

"Kempton and the boys. You'll see. He won't pay two to one."

"Then we won't get three thousand lire," Catherine said. "I don't like this crooked racing!"

"We'll get two hundred lire."

"That's nothing. That doesn't do us any good. I thought we were going to get three thousand."

"It's crooked and disgusting," Ferguson said.

"Of course," said Catherine, "if it hadn't been crooked we'd never have backed him at all. But I would have liked the three thousand lire."

"Let's go down and get a drink and see what they pay," Crowell said. We went out to where they posted the numbers and the bell

rang to payoff and they put up 18.50 after Japalac to win. That meant he paid less than even money on a ten-lira bet.

We went to the bar under the grandstand and had a whiskey and soda apiece. We ran into a couple of Italians we knew and McAdams, the vice-consul, and they came up with us when we joined the girls. The Italians were full of manners and McAdams talked to Catherine while we went down to bet again. Mr. Meyers was standing near the pari-mutuel.

"Ask him what he played," I said to Crowell.

"What are you on, Mr. Meyers?" Crowell asked. Meyers took out his programme and pointed to the number five with his pencil.

"Do you mind if we play him too?" Crowell asked.

"Go ahead. Go ahead. But don't tell my wife I gave it to you."

"Will you have a drink?" I asked.

"No thanks. I never drink."

We put a hundred lire on number five to win and a hundred to place and then had another whiskey and soda apiece. I was feeling very good and we picked up a couple more Italians, who each had a drink with us, and went back to the girls. These Italians were also very mannered and matched manners with the two we had collected before. In a little while no one could sit down. I gave the tickets to Catherine.

"What horse is it?"

"I don't know. Mr. Meyers' choice."

"Don't you even know the name?"

"No. You can find it on the programme. Number five I think."

"You have touching faith," she said. The number five won but did not pay anything. Mr. Meyers was angry.

"You have to put up two hundred lire to make twenty," he said.

"Twelve lire for ten. It's not worth it. My wife lost twenty lire."

"I'll go down with you," Catherine said to me. The Italians all stood up. We went downstairs and out to the paddock.

"Do you like this?" Catherine asked.

“Yes. I guess I do.”

“It’s all right, I suppose,” she said. “But, darling, I can’t stand to see so many people.”

“We don’t see many.”

“No. But those Meyers and the man from the bank with his wife and daughters—”

“He cashes my sight drafts,” I said.

“Yes but someone else would if he didn’t. Those last four boys were awful.”

“We can stay out here and watch the race from the fence.”

“That will be lovely. And, darling, let’s back a horse we’ve never heard of and that Mr. Meyers won’t be backing.”

“All right.”

We backed a horse named Light For Me that finished fourth in a field of five. We leaned on the fence and watched the horses go by, their hoofs thudding as they went past, and saw the mountains off in the distance and Milan beyond the trees and the fields.

“I feel so much cleaner,” Catherine said. The horses were coming back, through the gate, wet and sweating, the jockeys quieting them and riding up to dismount under the trees.

“Wouldn’t you like a drink? We could have one out here and see the horses.”

“I’ll get them,” I said.

“The boy will bring them,” Catherine said. She put her hand up and the boy came out from the Pagoda bar beside the stables. We sat down at a round iron table.

“Don’t you like it better when we’re alone?”

“Yes,” I said.

“I felt very lonely when they were all there.”

“It’s grand here,” I said.

“Yes. It’s really a pretty course.”

“It’s nice.”

“Don’t let me spoil your fun, darling. I’ll go back whenever you

want."

"No," I said. "We'll stay here and have our drink. Then we'll go down and stand at the water jump for the steeplechase."

"You're awfully good to me," she said.

After we had been alone awhile we were glad to see the others again. We had a good time.

Chapter XXI

In September the first cool nights came, then the days were cool and the leaves on the trees in the park began to turn color and we knew the summer was gone. The fighting at the front went very badly and they could not take San Gabriele. The fighting on the Bainsizza plateau was over and by the middle of the month the fighting for San Gabriele was about over too. They could not take it. Ettore was gone back to the front. The horses were gone to Rome and there was no more racing. Crowell had gone to Rome too, to be sent back to America. There were riots twice in the town against the war and bad rioting in Turin. A British major at the club told me the Italians had lost one hundred and fifty thousand men on the Bainsizza plateau and on San Gabriele. He said they had lost forty thousand on the Carso besides. We had a drink and he talked. He said the fighting was over for the year down here and that the Italians had bitten off more than they could chew. He said the offensive in Flanders was going to the bad. If they killed men as they did this fall the Allies would be cooked in another year. He said we were all cooked but we were all right as long as we did not know it. We were all cooked. The thing was not to recognize it. The last country to realize they were cooked would win the war. We had another drink. Was I on somebody's staff? No. He was. It was all balls. We were alone in the club sitting back in one of the big leather sofas. His boots were smoothly polished dull leather. They were beautiful boots. He said it was all balls. They thought only in divisions and man-power. They all squabbled about divisions and only killed them when they got them. They were all cooked. The

Germans won the victories. By God they were soldiers. The old Hun was a soldier. But they were cooked too. We were all cooked. I asked about Russia. He said they were cooked already. I'd soon see they were cooked. Then the Austrians were cooked too. If they got some Hun divisions they could do it. Did he think they would attack this fall? Of course they would. The Italians were cooked. Everybody knew they were cooked. The old Hun would come down through the Trentino and cut the railway at Vicenza and then where would the Italians be? They tried that in 'sixteen, I said. Not with Germans. Yes, I said. But they probably wouldn't do that, he said. It was too simple. They'd try something complicated and get royally cooked. I had to go, I said. I had to get back to the hospital. "Goodbye," he said. Then cheerily, "Every sort of luck!" There was a great contrast between his world pessimism and personal cheeriness.

I stopped at a barber shop and was shaved and went home to the hospital. My leg was as well as it would get for a long time. I had been up for examination three days before. There were still some treatments to take before my course at the Ospedale Maggiore was finished and I walked along the side street practicing not limping. An old man was cutting silhouettes under an arcade. I stopped to watch him. Two girls were posing and he cut their silhouettes together, snipping very fast and looking at them, his head on one side. The girls were giggling. He showed me the silhouettes before he pasted them on white paper and handed them to the girls.

"They're beautiful," he said. "How about you, Tenente?"

The girls went away looking at their silhouettes and laughing. They were nice-looking girls. One of them worked in the wine shop across from the hospital.

"All right," I said.

"Take your cap off."

"No. With it on."

“It will not be so beautiful,” the old man said. “But,” he brightened, “it will be more military.”

He snipped away at the black paper, then separated the two thicknesses and pasted the profiles on a card and handed them to me.

“How much?”

“That’s all right.” He waved his hand. “I just made them for you.”

“Please.” I brought out some coppers. “For pleasure.”

“No. I did them for a pleasure. Give them to your girl.”

“Many thanks until we meet.”

“Until I see thee.”

I went on to the hospital. There were some letters, an official one, and some others. I was to have three weeks’ convalescent leave and then return to the front. I read it over carefully. Well, that was that. The convalescent leave started October fourth when my course was finished. Three weeks was twenty-one days. That made October twenty-fifth. I told them I would not be in and went to the restaurant a little way up the street from the hospital for supper and read my letters and the *Carriere Della Sera* at the table. There was a letter from my grandfather, containing family news, patriotic encouragement, a draft for two hundred dollars, and a few clippings; a dull letter from the priest at our mess, a letter from a man I knew who was flying with the French and had gotten in with a wild gang and was telling about it, and a note from Rinaldi asking me how long I was going to skulk in Milano and what was all the news? He wanted me to bring him phonograph records and enclosed a list. I drank a small bottle of chianti with the meal, had a coffee afterward with a glass of cognac, finished the paper, put my letters in my pocket, left the paper on the table with the tip and went out. In my room at the hospital r undressed, put on pajamas and a dressing-gown, pulled down the curtains on the door that opened onto the balcony and sitting up in bed read Boston papers

from a pile Mrs. Meyers had left for her boys at the hospital. The Chicago White Sox were winning the American League pennant and the New York Giants were leading the National League. Babe Ruth was a pitcher then playing for Boston. The papers were dull, the news was local and stale, and the war news was all old. The American news was all training camps. I was glad I wasn't in a training camp. The baseball news was all I could read and I did not have the slightest interest in it. A number of papers together made it impossible to read with interest. It was not very timely but I read at it for a while. I wondered if America really got into the war, if they would close down the major leagues. They probably wouldn't. There was still racing in Milan and the war could not be much worse. They had stopped racing in France. That was where our horse Japalac came from. Catherine was not due on duty until nine o'clock. I heard her passing along the floor when she first came on duty and once saw her pass in the hall. She went to several other rooms and finally came into mine.

"I'm late, darling," she said. "There was a lot to do. How are you?"

I told her about my papers and the leave.

"That's lovely," she said. "Where do you want to go?"

"Nowhere. I want to stay here."

"That's silly. You pick a place to go and I'll come too."

"How will you work it?"

"I don't know. But I will."

"You're pretty wonderful."

"No I'm not. But life isn't hard to manage when you've nothing to lose."

"How do you mean?"

"Nothing. I was only thinking how small obstacles seemed that once were so big."

"I should think it might be hard to manage."

"No it won't, darling. If necessary I'll simply leave. But it won't

come to that."

"Where should we go?"

"I don't care. Anywhere you want. Anywhere we don't know people."

"Don't you care where we go?"

"No. I'll like anyplace."

She seemed upset and taut.

"What's the matter, Catherine?"

"Nothing. Nothing's the matter."

"Yes there is."

"No nothing. Really nothing."

"I know there is. Tell me, darling. You can tell me."

"It's nothing."

"Tell me."

"I don't want to. I'm afraid I'll make you unhappy or worry you."

"No it won't."

"You're sure? It doesn't worry me but I'm afraid to worry you."

"It won't if it doesn't worry you."

"I don't want to tell."

"Tell it."

"Do I have to?"

"Yes."

"I'm going to have a baby, darling. It's almost three months along. You're not worried, are you? Please please don't. You mustn't worry."

"All right."

"Is it all right?"

"Of course."

"I did everything. I took everything but it didn't make any difference."

"I'm not worried."

"I couldn't help it, darling, and I haven't worried about it. You

mustn't worry or feel badly."

"I only worry about you."

"That's it. That's what you mustn't do. People have babies all the time. Everybody has babies. It's a natural thing."

"You're pretty wonderful."

"No I'm not. But you mustn't mind, darling. I'll try and not make trouble for you. I know I've made trouble now. But haven't I been a good girl until now? You never knew it, did you?"

"No."

"It will all be like that. You simply mustn't worry. I can see you're worrying. Stop it. Stop it right away. Wouldn't you like a drink, darling? I know a drink always makes you feel cheerful."

"No. I feel cheerful. And you're pretty wonderful."

"No I'm not. But I'll fix everything to be together if you pick out a place for us to go. It ought to be lovely in October. We'll have a lovely time, darling, and I'll write you every day while you're at the front."

"Where will you be?"

"I don't know yet. But somewhere splendid. I'll look after all that."

We were quiet awhile and did not talk. Catherine was sitting on the bed and I was looking at her but we did not touch each other. We were apart as when someone comes into a room and people are self-conscious. She put out her hand and took mine.

"You aren't angry are you, darling?"

"No."

"And you don't feel trapped?"

"Maybe a little. But not by you."

"I didn't mean by me. You mustn't be stupid. I meant trapped at all."

"You always feel trapped biologically."

She went away a long way without stirring or removing her hand.

"'Always' isn't a pretty word."

"I'm sorry."

"It's all right. But you see I've never had a baby and I've never even loved anyone. And I've tried to be the way you wanted and then you talk about 'always.'"

"I could cut off my tongue," I offered.

"Oh, darling!" she came back from wherever she had been. "You mustn't mind me." We were both together again and the self-consciousness was gone. "We really are the same one and we mustn't misunderstand on purpose."

"We won't."

"But people do. They love each other and they misunderstand on purpose and they fight and then suddenly they aren't the same one. "

"We won't fight."

"We mustn't. Because there's only us two and in the world there's all the rest of them. If anything comes between us we're gone and then they have us."

"They won't get us," I said. "Because you're too brave. Nothing ever happens to the brave."

"They die of course."

"But only once."

"I don't know. Who said that?"

"The coward dies a thousand deaths, the brave but one?"

"Of course. Who said it?"

"I don't know."

"He was probably a coward," she said. "He knew a great deal about cowards but nothing about the brave. The brave dies perhaps two thousand deaths if he's intelligent. He simply doesn't mention them."

"I don't know. It's hard to see inside the head of the brave."

"Yes. That's how they keep that way."

"You're an authority."

“You’re right, darling. That was deserved.”

“You’re brave.”

“No,” she said. “But I would like to be.”

“I’m not,” I said. “I know where I stand. I’ve been out long enough to know. I’m like a ball-player that bats two hundred and thirty and knows he’s no better.”

“What is a ball-player that bats two hundred and thirty? It’s awfully impressive.”

“It’s not. It means a mediocre hitter in baseball.”

“But still a hitter,” she prodded me.

“I guess we’re both conceited,” I said. “But you are brave.”

“No. But I hope to be.”

“We’re both brave,” I said. “And I’m very brave when I’ve had a drink.”

“We’re splendid people,” Catherine said. She went over to the armoire and brought me the cognac and a glass. “Have a drink, darling,” she said. “You’ve been awfully good.”

“I don’t really want one.”

“Take one.”

“All right.” I poured the water glass a third full of cognac and drank it off.

“That was very big,” she said. “I know brandy is for heroes. But you shouldn’t exaggerate.”

“Where will we live after the war?”

“In an old people’s home probably,” she said. “For three years I looked forward very childishly to the war ending at Christmas. But now I look forward till when our son will be a lieutenant commander.”

“Maybe he’ll be a general.”

“If it’s an hundred years’ war he’ll have time to try both of the services. “

“Don’t you want a drink?”

“No. It always makes you happy, darling, and it only makes me

dizzy."

"Didn't you ever drink brandy?"

"No, darling. I'm a very old-fashioned wife."

I reached down to the floor for the bottle and poured another drink.

"I'd better go to have a look at your compatriots," Catherine said. "Perhaps you'll read the papers until I come back."

"Do you have to go?"

"Now or later."

"All right. Now."

"I'll come back later."

"I'll have finished the papers," I said.

Chapter XXII

It turned cold that night and the next day it was raining. Coming home from the Ospedale Maggiore it rained very hard and I was wet when I came in. Up in my room the rain was coming down heavily outside on the balcony, and the wind blew it against the glass doors. I changed my clothing and drank some brandy but the brandy did not taste good. I felt sick in the night and in the morning after breakfast I was nauseated.

"There is no doubt about it," the house surgeon said. "Look at the whites of his eyes, Miss."

Miss Gage looked. They had me look in a glass. The whites of the eyes were yellow and it was the jaundice. I was sick for two weeks with it. For that reason we did not spend a convalescent leave together. We had planned to go to Pallanza on Lago Maggiore. It is nice there in the fall when the leaves turn. There are walks you can take and you can troll for trout in the lake. It would have been better than Stresa because there are fewer people at Pallanza. Stresa is so easy to get to from Milan that there are always people you know. There is a nice village at Pallanza there is a restaurant on the biggest island. But we did not go.

One day while I was in bed with jaundice Miss Van Campen came in the room, opened the door into the armoire and saw the empty bottles there. I had sent a load of them down by the porter and I believe she must have seen them going out and come up to find some more. They were mostly vermouth bottles, marsala bottles, capri bottles, empty chianti flasks and a few cognac bottles. The porter had carried out the large bottles, those that had held

vermouth, and the straw-covered chianti flasks, and left the brandy bottles for the last. It was the brandy bottles and a bottle shaped like a bear, which had held kummel, that Miss Van Campen found. The bear shaped bottle enraged her particularly. She held it up, the bear was sitting up on his haunches with his paws up, there was a cork in his glass head and a few sticky crystals at the bottom. I laughed.

"It is kummel," I said. "The best kummel comes in those bear-shaped bottles. It comes from Russia."

"Those are all brandy bottles, aren't they?" Miss Van Campen asked.

"I can't see them all," I said. "But they probably are."

"How long has this been going on?"

"I bought them and brought them in myself," I said. "I have had Italian officers visit me frequently and I have kept brandy to offer them."

"You haven't been drinking it yourself?" she said.

"I have also drunk it myself."

"Brandy," she said. "Eleven empty bottles of brandy and that bear liquid."

"Kümmel."

"I will send for someone to take them away. Those are all the empty bottles you have?"

"For the moment."

"And I was pitying you having jaundice. Pity is something that is wasted on you."

"Thank you."

"I suppose you can't be blamed for not wanting to go back to the front. But I should think you would try something more intelligent than producing jaundice with alcoholism."

"With what?"

"With alcoholism. You heard me say it." I did not say anything. "Unless you find something else I'm afraid you will have to go back

to the front when you are through with your jaundice. I don't believe self-inflicted jaundice entitles you to a convalescent leave."

"You don't?"

"I do not."

"Have you ever had jaundice, Miss Van Campen?"

"No, but I have seen a great deal of it."

"You noticed how the patients enjoyed it?"

"I suppose it is better than the front."

"Miss Van Campen," I said, "did you ever know a man who tried to disable himself by kicking himself in the scrotum?"

Miss Van Campen ignored the actual question. She had to ignore it or leave the room. She was not ready to leave because she had disliked me for a long time and she was now cashing in.

"I have known many men to escape the front through self-inflicted wounds."

"That wasn't the question. I have seen self-inflicted wounds also. I asked you if you had ever known a man who had tried to disable himself by kicking himself in the scrotum. Because that is the nearest sensation to jaundice and it is a sensation that I believe few women have ever experienced. That was why I asked you if you had ever had the jaundice, Miss Van Campen, because—" Miss Van Campen left the room. Later Miss Gage came in.

"What did you say to Van Campen? She was furious."

"We were comparing sensations. I was going to suggest that she had never experienced childbirth—"

"You're a fool," Gage said. "She's after your scalp."

"She has my scalp," I said. "She's lost me my leave and she might try and get me court martialled. She's mean enough."

"She never liked you," Gage said. "What's it about?"

"She says I've drunk myself into jaundice so as not to go back to the front."

"Pooh," said Gage. "I'll swear you've never taken a drink. Everybody will swear you've never taken a drink."

“She found the bottles.”

“I’ve told you a hundred times to clear out those bottles. Where are they now?”

“In the armoire.”

“Have you a suitcase?”

“No. Put them in that rucksack.”

Miss Gage packed the bottles in the rucksack. “I’ll give them to the porter,” she said. She started for the door.

“Just a minute,” Miss Van Campen said. “I’ll take those bottles.” She had the porter with her. “Carry them, please,” she said. “I want to show them to the doctor when I make my report.”

She went down the hall. The porter carried the sack. He knew what was in it.

Nothing happened except that I lost my leave.

Chapter XXIII

The night I was to return to the front I sent the porter down to hold a seat for me on the train when it came from Turin. The train was to leave at midnight. It was made up at Turin and reached Milan about half-past ten at night and lay in the station until time to leave. You had to be there when it came in, to get a seat. The porter took a friend with him, a machine gunner on leave who worked in a tailor shop, and was sure that between them they could hold a place. I gave them money for platform tickets and had them take my baggage. There was a big rucksack and two musettes.

I said goodbye at the hospital at about five o'clock and went out. The porter had my baggage in his lodge and I told him I would be at the station a little before midnight. His wife called me "Signorino" and cried. She wiped her eyes and shook hands and then cried again. I patted her on the back and she cried once more. She had done my mending and was a very short dumpy, happy-faced woman with white hair. When she cried her whole face went to pieces. I went down to the corner where there was a wine shop and waited inside looking out the window. It was dark outside and cold and misty. I paid for my coffee and grappa and I watched the people going by in the light from the window. I saw Catherine and knocked on the window. She looked, saw me and smiled, and I went out to meet her. She was wearing a dark blue cape and a soft felt hat. We walked along together, along the sidewalk past the wine shops, then across the market square and up the street and through the archway to the cathedral square. There were streetcar tracks and beyond them was the cathedral. It was white and wet in

the mist. We crossed the tram tracks. On our left were the shops, their windows lighted, and the entrance to the galleria. There was a fog in the square and when we came close to the front of the cathedral it was very big and the stone was wet.

"Would you like to go in?"

"No," Catherine said. We walked along. There was a soldier standing with his girl in the shadow of one of the stone buttresses ahead of us and we passed them. They were standing tight up against the stone and he had put his cape around her.

"They're like us," I said.

"Nobody is like us," Catherine said. She did not mean it happily.

"I wish they had some place to go."

"It mightn't do them any good."

"I don't know. Everybody ought to have some place to go."

"They have the cathedral," Catherine said. We were past it now. We crossed the far end of the square and looked back at the cathedral. It was fine in the mist. We were standing in front of the leather goods shop. There were riding boots, a rucksack and ski boots in the window. Each article was set apart as an exhibit; the rucksack in the centre, the riding boots on one side and the ski boots on the other. The leather was dark and oiled smooth as a used saddle. The electric light made high lights on the dull oiled leather.

"We'll ski some time."

"In two months there will be skiing at Mürren," Catherine said.

"Let's go there."

"All right," she said. We went on past other windows and turned down a side street.

"I've never been this way."

"This is the way I go to the hospital," I said. It was a narrow street and we kept on the right-hand side. There were many people passing in the fog. There were shops and all the windows were lighted. We looked in a window at a pile of cheeses. I stopped in front of an armorer's shop.

“Come in a minute. I have to buy a gun.”

“What sort of gun?”

“A pistol.” We went in and I unbuttoned my belt and laid it with the empty holster on the counter. Two women were behind the counter. The women brought out several pistols.

“It must fit this,” I said, opening the holster. It was a gray leather holster and I had bought it second-hand to wear in the town.

“Have they good pistols?” Catherine asked.

“They’re all about the same. Can I try this one?” I asked the woman.

“I have no place now to shoot,” she said. “But it is very good. You will not make a mistake with it.”

I snapped it and pulled back the action. The spring was rather strong but it worked smoothly. I sighted it and snapped it again.

“It is used,” the woman said. “It belonged to an officer who was an excellent shot.”

“Did you sell it to him?”

“Yes.”

“How did you get it back?”

“From his orderly.”

“Maybe you have mine,” I said. “How much is this?”

“Fifty lire. It is very cheap.”

“All right. I want two extra clips and a box of cartridges

She brought them from under the counter.

“Have you any need for a sword?” she asked. “I have some used swords very cheap.”

“I’m going to the front,” I said.

“Oh yes, then you won’t need a sword,” she said.

I paid for the cartridges and the pistol, filled the magazine and put it in place, put the pistol in my empty holster, filled the extra clips with cartridges and put them in the leather slots on the holster and then buckled on my belt. The pistol felt heavy on the belt. Still,

I thought, it was better to have a regulation pistol. You could always get shells.

"Now we're fully armed," I said. "That was the one thing I had to remember to do. Someone got my other one going to the hospital."

"I hope it's a good pistol," Catherine said.

"Was there anything else?" the woman asked

"I don't believe so."

"The pistol has a lanyard," she said.

"So I noticed." The woman wanted to sell something else.

"You don't need a whistle?"

"I don't believe so."

The woman said goodbye and we went out onto the sidewalk. Catherine looked in the window. The woman looked out and bowed to us.

"What are those little mirrors set in wood for?"

"They're for attracting birds. They twirl them out in the field and larks see them and come out and the Italians shoot them."

"They are an ingenious people," Catherine said. "You don't shoot larks do you, darling, in America?"

"Not especially."

We crossed the street and started to walk up the other side.

"I feel better now," Catherine said. "I felt terrible when we started."

"We always feel good when we're together."

"We always will be together."

"Yes, except that I'm going away at midnight."

"Don't think about it, darling."

We walked on up the street. The fog made the lights yellow.

"Aren't you tired?" Catherine asked.

"How about you?"

"I'm all right. It's fun to walk."

"But let's not do it too long."

“No.”

We turned down a side street where there were no lights and walked in the street. I stopped and kissed Catherine. While I kissed her I felt her hand on my shoulder. She had pulled my cape around her so it covered both of us. We were standing in the street against a high wall.

“Let’s go someplace,” I said.

“Good,” said Catherine. We walked on along the street until it came out onto a wider street that was beside a canal. On the other side was a brick wall and buildings. Ahead, down the street, I saw a streetcar cross a bridge.

“We can get a cab up at the bridge,” I said. We stood on the bridge in the fog waiting for a carriage. Several streetcars passed, full of people going home. Then a carriage came along but there was someone in it. The fog was turning to rain.

“We could walk or take a tram,” Catherine said.

“One will be along,” I said. “They go by here.”

“Here one comes,” she said.

The driver stopped his horse and lowered the metal sign on his meter. The top of the carriage was up and there were drops of water on the driver’s coat. His varnished hat was shining in the wet. We sat back in the seat together and the top of the carriage made it dark.

“Where did you tell him to go?”

“To the station. There’s a hotel across from the station where we can go.”

“We can go the way we are? Without luggage?”

“Yes,” I said.

It was a long ride to the station up side streets in the rain.

“Won’t we have dinner?” Catherine asked. “I’m afraid I’ll be hungry.”

“We’ll have it in our room.”

“I haven’t anything to wear. I haven’t even a nightgown.”

“We’ll get one,” I said and called to the driver.

“Go to the Via Manzoni and up that.” He nodded and turned off to the left at the next corner. On the big street Catherine watched for a shop.

“Here’s a place,” she said. I stopped the driver and Catherine got out, walked across the sidewalk and went inside. I sat back in the carriage and waited for her. It was raining and I could smell the wet street and the horse steaming in the rain. She came back with a package and got in and we drove on.

“I was very extravagant, darling,” she said, “but it’s a fine nightgown.”

At the hotel I asked Catherine to wait in the carriage while I went in and spoke to the manager. There were plenty of rooms. Then I went out to the carriage, paid the driver, and Catherine and I walked in together. The small boy in buttons carried the package. The manager bowed us toward the elevator. There was much red plush and brass. The manager went up in the elevator with us.

“Monsieur and Madame wish dinner in their rooms?”

“Yes. Will you have the menu brought up?” I said.

“You wish something special for dinner. Some game or a soufflé”.

The elevator passed three floors with a click each time, then clicked and stopped.

“What have you as game?”

“I could get a pheasant, or a woodcock.”

“A woodcock,” I said. We walked down the corridor. The carpet was worn. There were many doors. The manager stopped and unlocked a door and opened it.

“Here you are. A lovely room.”

The small boy in buttons put the package on the table in the centre of the room. The manager opened the curtains.

“It is foggy outside,” he said. The room was furnished in red plush. There were many mirrors, two chairs and a large bed with a

satin coverlet. A door led to the bathroom.

"I will send up the menu," the manager said. He bowed and went out.

I went to the window and looked out, then pulled a cord that shut the thick plush curtains. Catherine was sitting on the bed, looking at the cut glass chandelier. She had taken her hat off and her hair shone under the light. She saw herself in one of the mirrors and put her hands to her hair. I saw her in three other mirrors. She did not look happy. She let her cape fall on the bed.

"What's the matter, darling?"

"I never felt like a whore before," she said. I went over to the window and pulled the curtain aside and looked out. I had not thought it would be like this.

"You're not a whore."

"I know it, darling. But it isn't nice to feel like one." Her voice was dry and Hat.

‹This was the best hotel we could get in," I said. I looked out the window. Across the square were the lights of the station. There were carriages going by on the street and I saw the trees in the park. The lights from the hotel shone on the wet pavement. Oh, hell, I thought, do we have to argue now?

"Come over here please," Catherine said. The flatness was all gone out of her voice. "Come over, please. I'm a good girl again." I looked over at the bed. She was smiling.

I went over and sat on the bed beside her and kissed her.

"You're my good girl."

"I'm certainly yours," she said.

After we had eaten we felt fine, and then after, we felt very happy and in a little time the room felt like our own home. My room at the hospital had been our own home and this room was our home too in the same way.

Catherine wore my tunic over her shoulders while we ate. We were very hungry and the meal was good and we drank a bottle of

Capri and a bottle of St. Estephe. I drank most of it but Catherine drank some and it made her feel splendid. For dinner we had a woodcock with soufflé potatoes and purée de marron, a salad, and zabaione for dessert.

"It's a fine room," Catherine said. "It's a lovely room. We should have stayed here all the time we've been in Milan."

"It's a funny room. But it's nice."

"Vice is a wonderful thing," Catherine said. "The people who go in for it seem to have good taste about it. The red plush is really fine. It's just the thing. And the mirrors are very attractive."

"You're a lovely girl."

"I don't know how a room like this would be for waking up in the morning. But it's really a splendid room." I poured another glass of St. Estephe.

"I wish we could do something really sinful," Catherine said. "Everything we do seems so innocent and simple. I can't believe we do anything wrong."

"You're a grand girl."

"I only feel hungry. I get terribly hungry."

"You're a fine simple girl," I said.

"I am a simple girl. No one ever understood it except you."

"Once when I first met you I spent an afternoon thinking how we would go to the Hotel Cavour together and how it would be."

"That was awfully cheeky of you. This isn't the Cavour is it?"

"No. They wouldn't have taken us in there."

"They'll take us in some time. But that's how we differ, darling. I never thought about anything."

"Didn't you ever at all?"

"A little," she said.

"Oh you're a lovely girl."

I poured another glass of wine.

'I'm a very simple girl," Catherine said.

"I didn't think so at first. I thought you were a crazy girl."

“I was a little crazy. But I wasn’t crazy in any complicated manner. I didn’t confuse you did I, darling?”

“Wine is a grand thing,” I said. “It makes you forget all the bad.”

“It’s lovely,” said Catherine. “But it’s given my father gout very badly.”

“Have you a father?”

“Yes,” said Catherine. “He has gout. You won’t ever have to meet him. Haven’t you a father?”

“No,” I said. “A stepfather.”

“Will I like him?”

“You won’t have to meet him.”

“We have such a fine time,” Catherine said. “I don’t take any interest in anything else anymore. I’m so very happy married to you.”

The waiter came and took away the things. After a while we were very still and we could hear the rain. Down below on the street a motor car honked.

“‘But at my back I always hear

Time’s winged chariot hurrying near,’”

I said.

“I know that poem,” Catherine said. “It’s by Marvell. But it’s about a girl who wouldn’t live with a man.”

My head felt very clear and cold and I wanted to talk facts.

“Where will you have the baby?

“I don’t know. The best place I can find.”

“How will you arrange it?”

“The best way I can. Don’t worry, darling. We may have several babies before the war is over.”

“It’s nearly time to go.”

“I know. You can make it time if you want.”

“No.”

“Then don’t worry, darling. You were fine until now and now you’re worrying.”

“I won’t. How often will you write?”
“Every day. Do they read your letters?”
“They can’t read English enough to hurt any.”
“I’ll make them very confusing,” Catherine said.
“But not too confusing.”
“I’ll just make them a little confusing.”
“I’m afraid we have to start to go.”
“All right, darling.”
“I hate to leave our fine house.”
“So do I.”
“But we have to go.”
“All right. But we’re never settled in our home very long.”
“We will be.”
“I’ll have a fine home for you when you come back.”
“Maybe I’ll be back right away.”
“Perhaps you’ll be hurt just a little in the foot.”
“Or the lobe of the ear.”
“No I want your ears the way they are.”
“And not my feet?”
“Your feet have been hit already.”
“We have to go, darling. Really.”
“All right. You go first.”

Chapter XXIV

We walked down the stairs instead of taking the elevator. The carpet on the stairs was worn. I had paid for the dinner when it came up and the waiter, who had brought it, was sitting on a chair near the door. He jumped up and bowed and I went with him into the side room and paid the bill for the room. The manager had remembered me as a friend and refused payment in advance but when he retired he had remembered to have the waiter stationed at the door so that I should not get out without paying. I suppose that had happened; even with his friends. One had so many friends in a war.

I asked the waiter to get us a carriage and he took Catherine's package that I was carrying and went out with an umbrella. Outside through the window we saw him crossing the street in the rain. We stood in the side room and looked out the window.

"How do you feel, Cat?"

"Sleepy."

"I feel hollow and hungry."

"Have you anything to eat?"

"Yes, in my musette."

I saw the carriage coming. It stopped, the horse's head hanging in the rain, and the waiter stepped out, opened his umbrella, and came toward the hotel. We met him at the door and walked out under the umbrella down the wet walk to the carriage at the curb. Water was running in the gutter.

"There is your package on the seat," the waiter said. He stood with the umbrella until we were in and I had tipped him.

“Many thanks. Pleasant journey,” he said. The coachman lifted the reins and the horse started. The waiter turned away under the umbrella and went toward the hotel. We drove down the street and turned to the left, then came around to the right in front of the station. There were two carabinieri standing under the light just out of the rain. The light shone on their hats. The rain was clear and transparent against the light from the station. A porter came out from under the shelter of the station, his shoulders up against the rain.

“No,” I said. “Thanks. I don’t need thee.”

He went back under the shelter of the archway. I turned to Catherine. Her face was in the shadow from the hood of the carriage.

“We might as well say goodbye.”

“I can’t go in?”

“No.”

“Goodbye, Cat.”

“Will you tell him the hospital?”

“Yes.”

I told the driver the address to drive to. He nodded.

“Goodbye,” I said. “Take good care of yourself and young Catherine.”

“Goodbye, darling.”

“Goodbye,” I said. I stepped out into the rain and the carriage started. Catherine leaned out and I saw her face in the light. She smiled and waved. The carriage went up the street, Catherine pointed in toward the archway. I looked, there were only the two carabinieri and the archway. I realized she meant for me to get in out of the rain. I went in and stood and watched the carriage turn the corner. Then I started through the station and down the runway to the train.

The porter was on the platform looking for me. I followed him into the train, crowding past people and along the aisle and in

through a door to where the machine gunner sat in the corner of a full compartment. My rucksack and musettes were above his head on the luggage rack. There were many men standing in the corridor and the men in the compartment all looked at us when we came in. There were not enough places in the train and everyone was hostile. The machine gunner stood up for me to sit down. Someone tapped me on the shoulder. I looked around. It was a very tall gaunt captain of artillery with a red scar along his jaw. He had looked through the glass on the corridor and then come in.

"What do you say?" I asked. I had turned and faced him. He was taller than I and his face was very thin under the shadow of his cap-visor and the scar was new and shiny. Everyone in the compartment was looking at me.

"You can't do that," he said. "You can't have a soldier save you a place."

"I have done it."

He swallowed and I saw his Adam's apple go up and then down. The machine gunner stood in front of the place. Other men looked in through the glass. No one in the compartment said anything.

"You have no right to do that. I was here two hours before you came."

"What do you want?"

"The seat."

"So do I."

I watched his face and could feel the whole compartment against me. I did not blame them. He was in the right. But I wanted the seat. Still no one said anything.

Oh, hell, I thought.

"Sit down, Signor Capitano," I said. The machine gunner moved out of the way and the tall captain sat down. He looked at me. His face seemed hurt. But he had the seat. "Get my things," I said to the machine gunner. We went out in the corridor. The train was full and I knew there was no chance of a place. I gave the porter and

the machine gunner ten lire apiece. They went down the corridor and outside on the platform looking in the windows but there were no places.

"Maybe some will get off at Brescia," the porter said.

"More will get on at Brescia," said the machine gunner. I said goodbye to them and we shook hands and they left. They both felt badly. Inside the train we were all standing in the corridor when the train started. I watched the lights of the station and the yards as we went out. It was still raining and soon the windows were wet and you could not see out. Later I slept on the floor of the corridor; first putting my pocketbook with my money and papers in it inside my shirt and trousers so that it was inside the leg of my breeches. I slept all night, waking at Brescia and Verona when more men got on the train, but going back to sleep at once. I had my head on one of the musettes and my arms around the other and I could feel the pack and they could all walk over me if they wouldn't step on me. Men were sleeping on the floor all down the corridor. Others stood holding on to the window rods or leaning against the doors. That train was always crowded.

BOOK THREE

Chapter XXV

Now in the fall the trees were all bare and the roads were muddy. I rode to Gorizia from Udine on a camion. We passed other camions on the road and I looked at the country. The mulberry trees were bare and the fields were brown. There were wet dead leaves on the road from the rows of bare trees and men were working on the road, tamping stone in the ruts from piles of crushed stone along the side of the road between the trees. We saw the town with a mist over it that cut off the mountains. We crossed the river and I saw that it was running high. It had been raining in the mountains. We came into the town past the factories and then the houses and villas and I saw that many more houses had been hit. On a narrow street we passed a British Red Cross ambulance. The driver wore a cap and his face was thin and very tanned. I did not know him. I got down from the camion in the big square in front of the Town Major's house, the driver handed down my rucksack and I put it on and swung on the two musettes and walked to our villa. It did not feel like a homecoming.

I walked down the damp gravel driveway looking at the villa through the trees. The windows were all shut but the door was open. I went in and found the major sitting at a table in the bare room with maps and typed sheets of paper on the wall.

"Hello," he said. "How are you?" He looked older and drier.

"I'm good," I said. "How is everything?"

"It's all over," he said. "Take off your kit and sit down." I put my pack and the two musettes on the floor and my cap on the pack. I brought the other chair over from the wall and sat down by the

desk.

"It's been a bad summer," the major said. "Are you strong now?"

"Yes."

"Did you ever get the decorations?"

"Yes. I got them fine. Thank you very much."

"Let's see them."

I opened my cape so he could see the two ribbons.

"Did you get the boxes with the medals?"

"No. Just the papers."

"The boxes will come later. That takes more time."

"What do you want me to do?"

"The cars are all away. There are six up north at Caporetto. You know Caporetto?"

"Yes," I said. I remembered it as a little white town with a campanile in a valley. It was a clean little town and there was a fine fountain in the square.

"They are working from there. There are many sick now. The fighting is over."

"Where are the others?"

"There are two up in the mountains and four still on the Bainsizza. The other two ambulance sections are in the Carso with the third army."

"What do you wish me to do?"

"You can go and take over the four cars on the Bainsizza if you like. Gino has been up there a long time. You haven't seen it up there, have you?"

"No."

"It was very bad. We lost three cars."

"I heard about it."

"Yes, Rinaldi wrote you."

"Where is Rinaldi?"

"He is here at the hospital. He has had a summer and fall of it."

"I believe it."

“It has been bad,” the major said. “You couldn’t believe how bad it’s been. I’ve often thought you were lucky to be hit when you were.”

“I know I was.”

“Next year will be worse,” the major said. “Perhaps they will attack now. They say they are to attack but I can’t believe it. It is too late. You saw the river?”

“Yes. It’s high already.”

“I don’t believe they will attack now that the rains have started. We will have the snow soon. What about your countrymen? Will there be other Americans besides yourself?”

“They are training an army of ten million.”

“I hope we get some of them. But the French will hog them all. We’ll never get any down here. All right. You stay here tonight and go out tomorrow with the little car and send Gino back. I’ll send somebody with you that knows the road. Gino will tell you everything. They are shelling quite a little still but it is all over. You will want to see the Bainsizza.”

“I’m glad to see it. I am glad to be back with you again, Signor Maggiore.”

He smiled. “You are very good to say so. I am very tired of this war. If I was away I do not believe I would come back.”

“Is it so bad?”

“Yes. It is so bad and worse. Go get cleaned up and find your friend Rinaldi.”

I went out and carried my bags up the stairs. Rinaldi was not in the room but his things were there and I sat down on the bed and unwrapped my puttees and took the shoe off my right foot. Then I lay back on the bed. I was tired and my right foot hurt. It seemed silly to lie on the bed with one shoe off, so I sat up and unlaced the other shoe and dropped it on the floor, then lay back on the blanket again. The room was stuffy with the window closed but I was too tired to get up and open it. I saw my things were all in one corner

of the room. Outside it was getting dark. I lay on the bed and thought about Catherine and waited for Rinaldi. I was going to try not to think about Catherine except at night before I went to sleep. But now I was tired and there was nothing to do, so I lay and thought about her. I was thinking about her when Rinaldi came in. He looked just the same. Perhaps he was a little thinner.

"Well, baby," he said. I sat up on the bed. He came over, sat down and put his arm around me. "Good old baby." He whacked me on the back and I held both his arms.

"Old baby," he said. "Let me see your knee."

"I'll have to take off my pants."

"Take off your pants, baby. We're all friends here. I want to see what kind of a job they did." I stood up, took off the breeches and pulled off the knee-brace. Rinaldi sat on the floor and bent the knee gently back and forth. He ran his finger along the scar; put his thumbs together over the kneecap and rocked the knee gently with his fingers.

"Is that all the articulation you have?"

"Yes."

"It's a crime to send you back. They ought to get complete articulation."

"It's a lot better than it was. It was stiff as a board."

Rinaldi bent it more. I watched his hands. He had fine surgeon's hands. I looked at the top of his head, his hair shiny and parted smoothly. He bent the knee too far.

"Ouch!" I said.

"You ought to have more treatment on it with the machines," Rinaldi said.

"It's better than it was."

"I see that, baby. This is something I know more about than you." He stood up and sat down on the bed. "The knee itself is a good job." He was through with the knee. "Tell me all about everything."

“There’s nothing to tell,” I said. “I’ve led a quiet life.”

“You act like a married man,” he said. “What’s the matter with you?”

“Nothing,” I said. “What’s the matter with you?”

“This war is killing me,” Rinaldi said, “I am very depressed by it.” He folded his hands over his knee.

“Oh,” I said.

“What’s the matter? Can’t I even have human impulses?”

“No. I can see you’ve been having a fine time. Tell me.”

“All summer and all fall I’ve operated. I work all the time. I do everybody’s work. All the hard ones they leave to me. By God, baby, I am becoming a lovely surgeon.”

“That sounds better.”

“I never think. No, by God, I don’t think; I operate.”

“That’s right.”

“But now, baby, it’s all over. I don’t operate now and I feel like hell. This is a terrible war, baby. You believe me when I say it. Now you cheer me up. Did you bring the phonograph records?”

“Yes.”

They were wrapped in paper in a cardboard box in my rucksack. I was too tired to get them out.

“Don’t you feel good yourself, baby?”

“I feel like hell.”

“This war is terrible,” Rinaldi said. “Come on. We’ll both get drunk and be cheerful. Then we’ll go get the ashes dragged. Then we’ll feel fine.”

“I’ve had the jaundice,” I said, “and I can’t get drunk.”

“Oh, baby, how you’ve come back to me. You come back serious and with a liver. I tell you this war is a bad thing. Why did we make it anyway.”

“We’ll have a drink. I don’t want to get drunk but we’ll have a drink.”

Rinaldi went across the room to the washstand and brought

back two glasses and a bottle of cognac.

"It's Austrian cognac," he said. "Seven stars. It's all they captured on San Gabriele."

"Were you up there?"

"No. I haven't been anywhere. I've been here all the time operating. Look, baby, this is your old tooth-brushing glass. I kept it all the time to remind me of you."

"To remind you to brush your teeth."

"No. I have my own too. I kept this to remind me of you trying to brush away the Villa Rossa from your teeth in the morning, swearing and eating aspirin and cursing harlots. Every time I see that glass I think of you trying to clean your conscience with a toothbrush." He came over to the bed. "Kiss me once and tell me you're not serious."

"I never kiss you. You're an ape."

"I know, you are the fine good Anglo-Saxon boy. I know. You are the remorse boy, I know. I will wait till I see the Anglo-Saxon brushing away harlotry with a toothbrush."

"Put some cognac in the glass."

We touched glasses and drank. Rinaldi laughed at me.

"I will get you drunk and take out your liver and put you in a good Italian liver and make you a man again."

I held the glass for some more cognac. It was dark outside now. Holding the glass of cognac, I went over and opened the window. The rain had stopped falling. It was colder outside and there was a mist in the trees.

"Don't throw the cognac out the window," Rinaldi said. "If you can't drink it give it to me."

"Go something yourself," I said. I was glad to see Rinaldi again. He had spent two years teasing me and I had always liked it. We understood each other very well.

"Are you married?" he asked from the bed. I was standing against the wall by the window.

"Not yet."

"Are you in love?"

"Yes."

"With that English girl?"

"Yes."

"Poor baby. Is she good to you?"

"Of course."

"I mean is she good to you practically speaking?"

"Shut up."

"I will. You will see I am a man of extreme delicacy. Does she —?"

"Rinin," I said. "Please shut up. If you want to be my friend, shut up."

"I don't *want* to be your friend, baby. I *am* your friend."

"Then shut up."

"All right."

I went over to the bed and sat down beside Rinaldi. He was holding his glass and looking at the floor.

"You see how it is, Rinin?"

"Oh, yes. All my life I encounter sacred subjects. But very few with you. I suppose you must have them too." He looked at the floor.

"You haven't any?"

"No."

"Not any?"

"No."

"I can say this about your mother and that about your sister?"

"And that about *your sister,"* Rinaldi said swiftly. We both laughed.

"The old superman," I said.

"I am jealous maybe," Rinaldi said.

"No, you're not."

"I don't mean like that. I mean something else. Have you any

married friends?"

"Yes," I said.

"I haven't," Rinaldi said. "Not if they love each other."

"Why not?"

"They don't like me."

"Why not?"

"I am the snake. I am the snake of reason."

"You're getting it mixed. The apple was reason."

"No, it was the snake." He was more cheerful.

"You are better when you don't think so deeply," I said.

"I love you, baby," he said. "You puncture me when I become a great Italian thinker. But I know many things I can't say. I know more than you."

"Yes. You do."

"But you will have a better time. Even with remorse you will have a better time."

"I don't think so."

"Oh, yes. That is true. Already I am only happy when I am working." He looked at the floor again.

"You'll get over that."

"No. I only like two other things; one is bad for my work and the other is over in half an hour or fifteen minutes. Sometimes less."

"Sometimes a good deal less."

"Perhaps I have improved, baby. You do not know. But there are only the two things and my work."

"You'll get other things."

"No. We never get anything. We are born with all we have and we never learn. We never get anything new. We all start complete. You should be glad not to be a Latin."

"There's no such thing as a Latin. That is 'Latin' thinking. You are so proud of your defects." Rinaldi looked up and laughed.

"We'll stop, baby. I am tired from thinking so much." He had looked tired when he came in. "It's nearly time to eat. I'm glad

you're back. You are my best friend and my war brother."

"When do the war brothers eat?" I asked.

"Right away. We'll drink once more for your liver's sake."

"Like Saint Paul."

"You are inaccurate. That was wine and the stomach. Take a little wine for your stomach's sake."

"Whatever you have in the bottle," I said. "For any sake you mention."

"To your girl," Rinaldi said. He held out his glass.

"All right."

"I'll never say a dirty thing about her."

"Don't strain yourself."

He drank off the cognac. "I am pure," he said. "I am like you, baby. I will get an English girl too. As a matter of fact I knew your girl first but she was a little tall for me. A tall girl for a sister," he quoted.

"You have a lovely pure mind," I said.

"Haven't I? That's why they call me Rinaldo Purissimo."

"Rinaldo Sporchissimo."

"Come on, baby, we'll go down to eat while my mind is still pure."

I washed, combed my hair and we went down the stairs. Rinaldi was a little drunk. In the room where we ate, the meal was not quite ready.

"I'll go get the bottle," Rinaldi said. He went off up the stairs. I sat at the table and he came back with the bottle and poured us each a half tumbler of cognac.

"Too much," I said and held up the glass and sighted at the lamp on the table.

"Not for an empty stomach. It is a wonderful thing. It burns out the stomach completely. Nothing is worse for you."

"All right."

"Self-destruction day by day," Rinaldi said. "It ruins the stomach

and makes the hand shake. Just the thing for a surgeon."

"You recommend it?"

"Heartily. I use no other. Drink it down, baby, and look forward to being sick."

I drank half the glass. In the hall I could hear the orderly calling. "Soup! Soup is ready!"

The major came in, nodded to us and sat down. He seemed very small at table.

"Is this all we are?" he asked. The orderly put the soup bowl down and he ladled out a plate full.

"We are all," Rinaldi said. "Unless the priest comes. If he knew Federico was here he would be here."

"Where is he?" I asked.

"He's at 307," the major said. He was busy with his soup. He wiped his mouth, wiping his upturned gray mustache carefully. "He will come I think. I called them and left word to tell him you were here."

"I miss the noise of the mess," I said.

"Yes, it's quiet," the major said.

"I will be noisy," said Rinaldi.

"Drink some wine, Enrico," said the major. He filled my glass. The spaghetti came in and we were all busy. We were finishing the spaghetti when the priest came in. He was the same as ever, small and brown and compact looking. I stood up and we shook hands. He put his hand on my shoulder.

"I came as soon as I heard," he said.

"Sit down," the major said. "You're late."

"Good-evening, priest," Rinaldi said, using the English word.

They had taken that up from the priest-baiting captain, who spoke a little English. "Good-evening, Rinaldo," the priest said. The orderly brought him soup but he said he would start with the spaghetti.

"How are you?" he asked me.

“Fine,” I said. “How have things been?”

“Drink some wine, priest,” Rinaldi said. “Take a little wine for your stomach’s sake. That’s Saint Paul, you know.”

“Yes I know,” said the priest politely. Rinaldi filled his glass.

“That Saint Paul,” said Rinaldi. “He’s the one who makes all the trouble.” The priest looked at me and smiled. I could see that the baiting did not touch him now.

“That Saint Paul,” Rinaldi said. “He was a rounder and a chaser and then when he was no longer hot he said it was no good. When he was finished he made the rules for us who are still hot. Isn’t it true, Federico?”

The major smiled. We were eating meat stew now.

“I never discuss a Saint after dark,” I said. The priest looked up from the stew and smiled at me.

“There he is, gone over with the priest,” Rinaldi said. “Where are all the good old priest-baiters? Where is Cavalcanti? Where is Brundi? Where is Cesare? Do I have to bait this priest alone without support?”

“He is a good priest,” said the major.

“He is a good priest,” said Rinaldi. “But still a priest. I try to make the mess like the old days. I want to make Federico happy. To hell with you, priest!”

I saw the major look at him and notice that he was drunk. His thin face was white. The line of his hair was very black against the white of his forehead.

“It’s all right, Rinaldo,” said the priest. “It’s all right.”

“To hell with you,” said Rinaldi. “To hell with the whole damn business.” He sat back in his chair.

“He’s been under a strain and he’s tired,” the major said to me. He finished his meat and wiped up the gravy with a piece of bread.

“I don’t give a damn,” Rinaldi said to the table. “To hell with the whole business.” He looked defiantly around the table, his eyes flat, his face pale.

"All right," I said. "To hell with the whole damn business."

"No, no," said Rinaldi. "You can't do it. You can't do it. I say you can't do it. You're dry and you're empty and there's nothing else. There's nothing else I tell you. Not a damned thing. I know, when I stop working."

The priest shook his head. The orderly took away the stew dish.

"What are you eating meat for?" Rinaldi turned to the priest. "Don't you know it's Friday?"

"It's Thursday," the priest said.

"It's a lie. It's Friday. You're eating the body of our Lord. It's God-meat. I know. It's dead Austrian. That's what you're eating."

"The white meat is from officers," I said, completing the old joke.

Rinaldi laughed. He filled his glass.

"Don't mind me," he said. "I'm just a little crazy."

"You ought to have a leave," the priest said.

The major shook his head at him. Rinaldi looked at the priest.

"You think I ought to have a leave?"

The major shook his head at the priest. Rinaldi was looking at the priest.

"Just as you like," the priest said. "Not if you don't want."

"To hell with you," Rinaldi said. "They try to get rid of me. Every night they try to get rid of me. I fight them off. What if I have it. Everybody has it. The whole world's got it. First," he went on, assuming the manner of a lecturer, "it's a little pimple. Then we notice a rash between the shoulders. Then we notice nothing at all. We put our faith in mercury."

"Or salvarsan," the major interrupted quietly.

"A mercurial product," Rinaldi said. He acted very elated now. "I know something worth two of that. Good old priest," he said. "You'll never get it. Baby will get it. It's an industrial accident. It's a simple industrial accident."

The orderly brought in the sweet and coffee. The dessert was a

sort of black bread pudding with hard sauce. The lamp was smoking; the black smoke going close up inside the chimney.

"Bring two candles and take away the lamp," the major said. The orderly brought two lighted candles each in a saucer, and took out the lamp blowing it out. Rinaldi was quiet now. He seemed all right. We talked and after the coffee we all went out into the hall.

"You want to talk to the priest. I have to go in the town," Rinaldi said. "Goodnight, priest."

"Goodnight, Rinaldo," the priest said.

"I'll see you, Fredi," Rinaldi said.

"Yes," I said. "Come in early." He made a face and went out the door. The major was standing with us. "He's very tired and overworked," he said. "He thinks too he has syphilis. I don't believe it but he may have. He is treating himself for it. Goodnight. You will leave before daylight, Enrico?"

"Yes."

"Goodbye then," he said. "Good luck. Peduzzi will wake you and go with you."

"Goodbye, Signor Maggiore."

"Goodbye. They talk about an Austrian offensive but I don't believe it. I hope not. But anyway it won't be here. Gino will tell you everything. The telephone works well now."

"I'll call regularly."

"Please do. Goodnight. Don't let Rinaldi drink so much brandy."

"I'll try not to."

"Goodnight, priest."

"Goodnight, Signor Maggiore."

He went off into his office.

Chapter XXVI

I went to the door and looked out. It had stopped raining but there was a mist.

"Should we go upstairs?" I asked the priest.

"I can only stay a little while."

"Come on up."

We climbed the stairs and went into my room. I lay down on Rinaldi's bed. The priest sat on my cot that the orderly had set up. It was dark in the room.

"Well," he said, "how are you really?"

"I'm all right. I'm tired tonight."

"I'm tired too, but from no cause."

"What about the war?"

"I think it will be over soon. I don't know why, but I feel it."

"How do you feel it?"

''You know how your major is? Gentle? Many people are like that now."

"I feel that way myself," I said.

"It has been a terrible summer," said the priest. He was surer of himself now than when I had gone away. "You cannot believe how it has been. Except that you have been there and you know how it can be. Many people have realized the war this summer. Officers whom I thought could never realize it realize it now."

"What will happen?" I stroked the blanket with my hand.

"I do not know but I do not think it can go on much longer."

"What will happen?"

"They will stop fighting."

“Who?”

“Both sides.”

“I hope so,” I said.

“You don’t believe it?”

“I don’t believe both sides will stop fighting at once.”

“I suppose not. It is too much to expect. But when I see the changes in men I do not think it can go on.”

“Who won the fighting this summer?”

“No one.”

“The Austrians won,” I said. “They kept them from taking San Gabriele. They’ve won. They won’t stop fighting.”

“If they feel as we feel they may stop. They have gone through the same thing.”

“No one ever stopped when they were winning.”

“You discourage me.”

“I can only say what I think.”

“Then you think it will go on and on? Nothing will ever happen?”

“I don’t know. I only think the Austrians will not stop when they have won a victory. It is in defeat that we become Christian.”

“The Austrians are Christians—except for the Bosnians.”

“I don’t mean technically Christian. I mean like Our Lord.”

He said nothing.

“We are all gentler now because we are beaten. How would Our Lord have been if Peter had rescued him in the Garden?”

“He would have been just the same.”

“I don’t think so,” I said.

“You discourage me,” he said. “I believe and I pray that something will happen. I have felt it very close.”

“Something may happen,” I said. “But it will happen only to us. If they felt the way we do, it would be all right. But they have beaten us. They feel another way.”

“Many of the soldiers have always felt this way. It is not because

they were beaten."

"They were beaten to start with. They were beaten when they took them from their farms and put them in the army. That is why the peasant has wisdom, because he is defeated from the start. Put him in power and see how wise he is."

He did not say anything. He was thinking.

"Now I am depressed myself," I said. "That's why I never think about these things. I never think and yet when I begin to talk I say the things I have found out in my mind without thinking."

"I had hoped for something."

"Defeat?"

"No. Something more."

"There isn't anything more. Except victory. It may be worse."

"I hoped for a long time for victory."

"Me too."

"Now I don't know."

"It has to be one or the other."

"I don't believe in victory anymore."

"I don't. But I don't believe in defeat. Though it may be better."

"What do you believe in?"

"In sleep," I said. He stood up.

"I am very sorry to have stayed so long. But I like so to talk with you."

"It is very nice to talk again. I said that about sleeping, meaning nothing."

We stood up and shook hands in the dark.

"I sleep at 307 now," he said.

"I go out on post early tomorrow."

"I'll see you when you come back."

"We'll have a walk and talk together." I walked with him to the door.

"Don't go down," he said. "It is very nice that you are back. Though not so nice for you." He put his hand on my shoulder.

“It’s all right for me,” I said. “Goodnight.”
“Goodnight. Ciaou!”
“Ciaou!” I said. I was deadly sleepy.

Chapter XXVII

I woke when Rinaldi came in but he did not talk and I went back to sleep again. In the morning I was dressed and gone before it was light. Rinaldi did not wake when I left.

I had not seen the Bainsizza before and it was strange to go up the slope where the Austrians had been, beyond the place on the river where I had been wounded. There was a steep new road and many trucks. Beyond, the road flattened out and I saw woods and steep hills in the mist. There were woods that had been taken quickly and not smashed. Then beyond where the road was not protected by the hills it was screened by matting on the sides and over the top. The road ended in a wrecked village. The lines were up beyond. There was much artillery around. The houses were badly smashed but things were very well organized and there were signboards everywhere. We found Gino and he got us some coffee and later I went with him and met various people and saw the posts. Gino said the British cars were working further down the Bainsizza at Ravne. He had great admiration for the British. There was still a certain amount of shelling, he said, but not many wounded. There would be many sick now the rains had started.

The Austrians were supposed to attack but he did not believe it. We were supposed to attack too, but they had not brought up any new troops so he thought that was off too. Food was scarce and he would be glad to get a full meal in Gorizia. What kind of supper had I had? I told him and he said that would be wonderful. He was especially impressed by the *dolce.* I did not describe it in detail, only said it was a *dolce,* and I think he believed it was something more

elaborate than bread pudding.

Did I know where he was going to go? I said I didn't but that some of the other cars were at Caporetto. He hoped he would go up that way. It was a nice little place and he liked the high mountain hauling up beyond. He was a nice boy and everyone seemed to like him. He said where it really had been hell was at San Gabriele and the attack beyond Lom that had gone bad. He said the Austrians had a great amount of artillery in the woods along Ternova ridge beyond and above us, and shelled the roads badly at night. There was a battery of naval guns that had gotten on his nerves. I would recognize them because of their flat trajectory. You heard the report and then the shriek commenced almost instantly. They usually fired two guns at once, one right after the other, and the fragments from the burst were enormous. He showed me one, a smoothly jagged piece of metal over a foot long. It looked like babbitting metal.

"I don't suppose they are so effective," Gino said. "But they scare me. They all sound as though they came directly for you. There is the boom, then instantly the shriek and burst. What's the use of not being wounded if they scare you to death?"

He said there were Croats in the lines opposite us now and some Magyars. Our troops were still in the attacking positions. There was no wire to speak of and no place to fall back to if there should be an Austrian attack. There were fine positions for defense along the low mountains that came up out of the plateau but nothing had been done about organizing them for defense. What did I think about the Bainsizza anyway?

I had expected it to be flatter, more like a plateau. I had not realized it was so broken up.

"Alto piano," Gino said, "but no piano."

We went back to the cellar of the house where he lived. I said I thought a ridge that flattened out on top and had a little depth would be easier and more practical to hold than a succession of small mountains. It was no harder to attack up a mountain than on

the level, I argued. “That depends on the mountains,” he said. “Look at San Gabriele.”

“Yes,” I said, “but where they had trouble was at the top where it was flat. They got up to the top easy enough.”

“Not so easy,” he said.

“Yes,” I said, “but that was a special case because it was a fortress rather than a mountain, anyway. The Austrians had been fortifying it for years.” I meant tactically speaking in a war where there was some movement a succession of mountains were nothing to hold as a line because it was too easy to turn them. You should have possible mobility and a mountain is not very mobile. Also, people always over-shoot downhill. If the flank were turned, the best men would be left on the highest mountains. I did not believe in a war in mountains. I had thought about it a lot, I said. You pinched off one mountain and they pinched off another but when something really started everyone had to get down off the mountains.

What were you going to do if you had a mountain frontier? He asked.

I had not worked that out yet, I said, and we both laughed. “But,” I said, “in the old days the Austrians were always whipped in the quadrilateral around Verona. They let them come down onto the plain and whipped them there.”

“Yes,” said Gino. “But those were Frenchmen and you can work out military problems clearly when you are fighting in somebody else’s country.”

“Yes,” I agreed, “when it is your own country you cannot use it so scientifically.”

“The Russians did, to trap Napoleon.”

“Yes, but they had plenty of country. If you tried to retreat to trap Napoleon in Italy you would find yourself in Brindisi.”

“A terrible place,” said Gino. “Have you ever been there?”

“Not to stay.”

“I am a patriot,” Gino said. “But I cannot love Brindisi or Taranto.”

“Do you love the Bainsizza?” I asked.

“The soil is sacred,” he said. “But I wish it grew more potatoes. You know when we came here we found fields of potatoes the Austrians had planted.”

“Has the food really been short?”

“I myself have never had enough to eat but I am a big eater and I have not starved. The mess is average. The regiments in the line get pretty good food but those in support don’t get so much. Something is wrong somewhere. There should be plenty of food.”

“The dogfish are selling it somewhere else.”

“Yes, they give the battalions in the front line as much as they can but the ones in back are very short. They have eaten all the Austrians’ potatoes and chestnuts from the woods. They ought to feed them better. We are big eaters. I am sure there is plenty of food. It is very bad for the soldiers to be short of food. Have you ever noticed the difference it makes in the way you think?”

“Yes,” I said. “It can’t win a war but it can lose one.”

“We won’t talk about losing. There is enough talk about losing. What has been done this summer cannot have been done in vain.”

I did not say anything. I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by billposters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of the places were all you could say and have them

mean anything. Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates. Gino was a patriot, so he said things that separated us sometimes, but he was also a fine boy and I understood his being a patriot. He was born one. He left with Peduzzi in the car to go back to Gorizia.

It stormed all that day. The wind drove down the rain and everywhere there was standing water and mud. The plaster of the broken houses was gray and wet. Late in the afternoon the rain stopped and from out number two post I saw the bare wet autumn country with clouds over the tops of the hills and the straw screening over the roads wet and dripping. The sun came out once before it went down and shone on the bare woods beyond the ridge. There were many Austrian guns in the woods on that ridge but only a few fired. I watched the sudden round puffs of shrapnel smoke in the sky above a broken farmhouse near where the line was; soft puffs with a yellow white flash in the centre. You saw the flash, then heard the crack, then saw the smoke ball distort and thin in the wind. There were many iron shrapnel balls in the rubble of the houses and on the road beside the broken house where the post was, but they did not shell near the post that afternoon. We loaded two cars and drove down the road that was screened with wet mats and the last of the sun came through in the breaks between the strips of mattings. Before we were out on the clear road behind the hill the sun was down. We went on down the clear road and as it turned a corner into the open and went into the square arched tunnel of matting the rain started again.

The wind rose in the night and at three o'clock in the morning with the rain coming in sheets there was a bombardment and the Croatians came over across the mountain meadows and through patches of woods and into the front line. They fought in the dark in the rain and a counter-attack of scared men from the second line

drove them back. There was much shelling and many rockets in the rain and machine gun and rifle fire all along the line. They did not come again and it was quieter and between the gusts of wind and rain we could hear the sound of a great bombardment far to the north.

The wounded were coming into the post, some were carried on stretchers, some walking and some were brought on the backs of men that came across the field. They were wet to the skin and all were scared. We filled two cars with stretcher cases as they came up from the cellar of the post and as I shut the door of the second car and fastened it I felt the rain on my face turn to snow. The flakes were coming heavy and fast in the rain.

When daylight came the storm was still blowing but the snow had stopped. It had melted as it fell on the wet ground and now it was raining again. There was another attack just after daylight but it was unsuccessful. We expected an attack all day but it did not come until the sun was going down. The bombardment started to the south below the long wooded ridge where the Austrian guns were concentrated. We expected a bombardment but it did not come. It was getting dark. Guns were firing from the field behind the village and the shells, going away, had a comfortable sound.

We heard that the attack to the south had been unsuccessful. They did not attack that night but we heard that they had broken through to the north. In the night word came that we were to prepare to retreat. The captain at the post told me this. He had it from the Brigade. A little while later he came from the telephone and said it was a lie. The Brigade had received orders that the line of the Bainsizza should be held no matter what happened. I asked about the break through and he said that he had heard at the Brigade that the Austrians had broken through the twenty-seventh army corps up toward Caporetto. There had been a great battle in the north all day.

"If those bastards let them through we are cooked," he said.

“It’s Germans that are attacking,” one of the medical officers said. The word Germans was something to be frightened of. We did not want to have anything to do with the Germans.

“There are fifteen divisions of Germans,” the medical officer said. “They have broken through and we will be cut off.”

“At the Brigade, they say this line is to be held. They say they have not broken through badly and that we will hold a line across the mountains from Monte Maggiore.”

“Where do they hear this?”

“From the Division.”

“The word that we were to retreat came from the Division.”

“We work under the Army Corps,” I said. “But here I work under you. Naturally when you tell me to go I will go. But get the orders straight.”

“The orders are that we stay here. You clear the wounded from here to the clearing station.”

“Sometimes we clear from the clearing station to the field hospitals too,” I said. “Tell me, I have never seen a retreat-if there is a retreat how are all the wounded evacuated?”

“They are not. They take as many as they can and leave the rest.”

“What will I take in the cars?”

“Hospital equipment.”

“All right,” I said.

The next night the retreat started. We heard that Germans and Austrians had broken through in the north and were coming down the mountain valleys toward Cividale and Udine. The retreat was orderly, wet and sullen. In the night, going slowly along the crowded roads we passed troops marching under the rain, guns, horses pulling wagons, mules, motor trucks, all moving away from the front. There was no more disorder than in an advance.

That night we helped empty the field hospitals that had been set up in the least ruined villages of the plateau, taking the wounded

down to Plava on the river-bed: and the next day hauled all day in the rain to evacuate the hospitals and clearing station at Plava. It rained steadily and the army of the Bainsizza moved down off the plateau in the October rain and across the river where the great victories had commenced in the spring of that year. We came into Gorizia in the middle of the next day. The rain had stopped and the town was nearly empty. As we came up the street they were loading the girls from the soldiers' whorehouse into a truck. There were seven girls and they had on their hats and coats and carried small suitcases. Two of them were crying. Of the others one smiled at us and put out her tongue and fluttered it up and down. She had thick full lips and black eyes.

I stopped the car and went over and spoke to the matron. The girls from the officers' house had left early that morning, she said. Where were they going? To Conegliano, she said. The truck started. The girl with thick lips put out her tongue again at us. The matron waved. The two girls kept on crying. The others looked interestedly out at the town. I got back in the car.

"We ought to go with them," Bonello said. "That would be a good trip."

"We'll have a good trip," I said.

"We'll have a hell of a trip."

"That's what I mean," I said. We came up the drive to the villa.

"I'd like to be there when some of those tough babies climb in and try and hop them."

"You think they will?"

"Sure. Everybody in the Second Army knows that matron." We were outside the villa.

"They call her the Mother Superior," Bonello said. "The girls are new but everybody knows her. They must have brought them up just before the retreat."

"They'll have a time."

"I'll say they'll have a time. I'd like to have a crack at them for

nothing. They charge too much at that house anyway. The government gyps us."

"Take the car out and have the mechanics go over it," I said. "Change the oil and check the differential. Fill it up and then get some sleep."

"Yes, Signor Tenente."

The villa was empty. Rinaldi was gone with the hospital. The major was gone taking hospital personnel in the staff car. There was a note on the window for me to fill the cars with the material piled in the hall and to proceed to Pordenone. The mechanics were gone already. I went out back to the garage. The other two cars came in while I was there and their drivers got down. It was starting to rain again.

"I'm so—sleepy I went to sleep three times coming here from Plava," Piani said. "What are we going to do, Tenente?"

"We'll change the oil, grease them, fill them up, then take them around in front and load up the junk they've left."

"Then do we start?"

"No, we'll sleep for three hours."

"Christ I'm glad to sleep," Bonello said. "I couldn't keep awake driving."

"How's your car, Aymo?" I asked.

"It's all right."

"Get me a monkey suit and I'll help you with the oil."

"Don't you do that, Tenente," Aymo said. "It's nothing to do. You go and pack your things."

"My things are all packed," I said. "I'll go and carry out the stuff that they left for us. Bring the cars around as soon as they're ready."

They brought the cars around to the front of the villa and we loaded them with the hospital equipment which was piled in the hallway. When it was all in, the three cars stood in line down the driveway under the trees in the rain. We went inside.

"Make a fire in the kitchen and dry your things," I said.

“I don’t care about dry clothes,” Piani said. “I want to sleep.”

“I’m going to sleep on the major’s bed,” Bonello said. “I’m going to sleep where the old man corks off.”

“I don’t care where I sleep,” Piani said.

“There are two beds in here.” I opened the door.

“I never knew what was in that room,” Bonello said.

“That was old fish-face’s room,” Piani said.

“You two sleep in there,” I said. “I’ll wake you.”

“The Austrians will wake us if you sleep too long, Tenente,” Bonello said.

“I won’t oversleep,” I said. “Where’s Aymo?”

“He went out in the kitchen.”

“Get to sleep,” I said.

“I’ll sleep,” Piani said. “I’ve been asleep sitting up all day. The whole top of my head kept coming down over my eyes.”

“Take your boots off,” Bonello said. “That’s old fish-face’s bed.”

“Fish-face is nothing to me.” Piani lay on the bed, his muddy boots straight out, his head on his arm. I went out to the kitchen. Aymo had a fire in the stove and a kettle of water on.

“I thought I’d start some *pasta asciutta,”* he said. “We’ll be hungry when we wake up.

“Aren’t you sleepy, Bartolomeo?”

“Not so sleepy. When the water boils I’ll leave it. The fire will go down.”

“You’d better get some sleep,” I said. “We can eat cheese and monkey meat.”

“This is better,” he said. “Something hot will be good for those two anarchists. You go to sleep, Tenente.”

“There’s a bed in the major’s room.”

“You sleep there.”

“No, I’m going up to my oId room. Do you want a drink, Bartolomeo?”

“When we go, Tenente. Now it wouldn’t do me any good.”

“If you wake in three hours and I haven’t called you, wake me, will you?”

“I haven’t any watch, Tenente.”

“There’s a clock on the wall in the major’s room.”

“All right.”

I went out then through the dining-room and the hall and up the marble stairs to the room where I had lived with Rinaldi. It was raining outside. I went to the window and looked out. It was getting dark and I saw the three cars standing in line under the trees. The trees were dripping in the rain. It was cold and the drops hung to the branches. I went back to Rinaldi’s bed and lay down and let sleep take me.

We ate in the kitchen before we started. Aymo had a basin of spaghetti with onions and tinned meat chopped up in it. We sat around the table and drank two bottles of the wine that had been left in the cellar of the villa. It was dark outside and still raining. Piani sat at the table very sleepy.

“I like a retreat better than an advance,” Bonello said. “On a retreat we drink barbera.”

“We drink it now. Tomorrow maybe we drink rainwater,” Aymo said.

“Tomorrow we’ll be in Udine. We’ll drink champagne. That’s where the slackers live. Wake up, Piani! We’ll drink champagne tomorrow in Udine!”

“I’m awake,” Piani said. He filled his plate with the spaghetti and meat. “Couldn’t you find tomato sauce, Barto?”

“There wasn’t any,” Aymo said.

“We’ll drink champagne in Udine,” Bonello said. He filled his glass with the clear red barbera.

“We may drink—before Udine,” Piani said.

“Have you eaten enough, Tenente?” Aymo asked.

“I’ve got plenty. Give me the bottle, Bartolomeo.”

“I have a bottle apiece to take in the cars,” Aymo said.

“Did you sleep at all?”

“I don’t need much sleep. I slept a little.”

“Tomorrow we’ll sleep in the king’s bed,” Bonello said. He was feeling very good.

“Tomorrow maybe we’ll sleep in—,” Piani said.

“I’ll sleep with the queen,” Bonello said. He looked to see how I took the joke.

“You’ll sleep wit—-,” Piani said sleepily.

“That’s treason, Tenente,” Bonello said. “Isn’t that treason?”

“Shut up,” I said. “You get too funny with a little wine.” Outside it was raining hard. I looked at my watch. It was half-past nine.

“It’s time to roll,” I said and stood up.

“Who are you going to ride with, Tenente?” Bonello asked.

“With Aymo. Then you come. Then Piani. We’ll start out on the road for Cormons.”

“I’m afraid I’ll go to sleep,” Piani said.

“Ail right. I’ll ride with you. Then Bonello. Then Aymo.”

“That’s the best way,” Piani said. “Because I’m so sleepy.”

“I’ll drive and you sleep awhile.”

“No. I can drive just so long as I know somebody will wake me up if I go to sleep.”

“I’ll wake you up. Put out the lights, Barto.”

“You might as well leave them,” Bonello said. “We’ve got no more use for this place.”

“I have a small locker trunk in my room,” I said. “Will you help take it down, Piani?”

“We’ll take it,” Piani said. “Come on, Aydo.” He went off into the hall with Bonello. I heard them going upstairs.

“This was a fine place,” Bartolomeo Aymo said. He put two bottles of wine and half a cheese into his haversack. “There won’t be a place like this again. Where will they retreat to, Tenente?”

“Beyond the Tagliamento, they say. The hospital and the sector are to be at Pordenone.”

“This is a better town than Pordenone.”
“I don’t know Pordenone,” I said. “I’ve just been through there.”
“It’s not much of a place,” Aymo said.

Chapter XXVIII

As we moved out through the town it was empty in the rain and the dark except for columns of troops and guns that were going through the main street. There were many trucks too and some carts going through on other streets and converging on the main road. When we were out past the tanneries onto the main road the troops, the motor trucks, the horse-drawn carts and the guns were in one wide slow-moving column. We moved slowly but steadily in the rain, the radiator cap of our car almost against the tailboard of a truck that was loaded high, the load covered with wet canvas. Then the truck stopped. The whole column was stopped. It started again and we went a little farther, then stopped. I got out and walked ahead, going between the trucks and carts and under the wet necks of the horses. The block was farther ahead. I left the road, crossed the ditch on a footboard and walked along the field beyond the ditch. I could see the stalled column between the trees in the rain as I went forward across from it in the field. I went about a mile. The column did not move, although, on the other side beyond the stalled vehicles I could see the troops moving. I went back to the cars. This block might extend as far as Udine. Piani was asleep over the wheel. I climbed up beside him and went to sleep too. Several hours later I heard the truck ahead of us grinding into gear. I woke Piani and we started, moving a few yards, then stopping, then going on again. It was still raining.

The column stalled again in the night and did not start. I got down and went back to see Aymo and Bonello. Bonello had two sergeants of engineers on the seat of his car with him. They

stiffened when I came up.

"They were left to do something to a bridge," Bonello said. "They can't find their unit so I gave them a ride."

"With the Sir Lieutenant's permission."

"With permission," I said.

"The lieutenant is an American," Bonello said. "He'll give anybody a ride."

One of the sergeants smiled. The other asked Bonello if I was an Italian from North or South America.

"He's not an Italian. He's North American English."

The sergeants were polite but did not believe it. I left them and went back to Aymo. He had two girls on the seat with him and was sitting back in the corner and smoking.

"Barto, Barto," I said. He laughed.

"Talk to them, Tenente," he said. "I can't understand them. Hey!" He put his hand on the girl's thigh and squeezed it in a friendly way. The girl drew her shawl tight around her and pushed his hand away. "Hey!" he said. "Tell the Tenente your name and what you're doing here."

The girl looked at me fiercely. The other girl kept her eyes down. The girl who looked at me said something in a dialect I could not understand a word of. She was plump and dark and looked about sixteen.

"Sorella?" I asked and pointed at the other girl.

She nodded her head and smiled.

"All right," I said and patted her knee. I felt her stiffen away when I touched her. The sister never looked up. She looked perhaps a year younger. Aymo put his hand on the elder girl's thigh and she pushed it away. He laughed at her.

"Good man," he pointed at himself. "Good man," he pointed at me. "Don't you worry." The girl looked at him fiercely. The pair of them were like two wild birds.

"What does she ride with me for if she doesn't like me?" Aymo

asked. “They got right up in the car the minute I motioned to them.” He turned to the girl. “Don’t worry,” he said. “No danger of —,” using the vulgar word. “No place for —.” I could see she understood the word and that was all. Her eyes looked at him very scared. She pulled the shawl tight. “Car all full,” Aymo said. “No danger of —. No place for —.” Every time he said the word the girl stiffened a little. Then sitting stiffly and looking at him she began to cry. I saw her lips working and then tears came down her plump cheeks. Her sister, not looking up, took her hand and they sat there together. The older one, who had been so fierce, began to sob.

“I guess I scared her,” Aymo said. “I didn’t mean to scare her.”

Bartolomeo brought out his knapsack and cut off two pieces of cheese. “Here,” he said. “Stop crying.”

The older girl shook her head and still cried, but the younger girl took the cheese and commenced to eat. After a while the younger girl gave her sister the second piece of cheese and they both ate. The older sister still sobbed a little.

“She’ll be all right after a while,” Aymo said.

An idea came to him. “Virgin?” he asked the girl next to him. She nodded her head vigorously. “Virgin too?” he pointed to the sister. Both the girls nodded their heads and the elder said something in dialect.

“That’s all right,” Bartolomeo said. “That’s all right.”

Both the girls seemed cheered.

I left them sitting together with Aymo sitting back in the corner and went back to Piani’s car. The column of vehicles did not move but the troops kept passing alongside. It was still raining hard and I thought some of the stops in the movement of the column might be from cars with wet wiring. More likely they were from horse! or men going to sleep. Still, traffic could tie up in cities when everyone was awake. It was the combination of horse and motor vehicles. They did not help each other any. The peasants’ carts did not help much either. Those were a couple of fine girls with Barto. A retreat

was no place for two virgins. Real virgins. Probably very religious. If there were no war we would probably all be in bed. In bed I lay me down my head. Bed and board. Stiff as a board in bed. Catherine was in bed now between two sheets, over her and under her. Which side did she sleep on? Maybe she wasn't asleep. Maybe she was lying thinking about me. Blow, blow, ye western wind. Well, it blew and it wasn't the small rain but the big rain down that rained. It rained all night. You knew it rained down that rained. Look at it. Christ, that my love were in my arms and I in my bed again. That my love Catherine. That my sweet love Catherine down might rain. Blow her again to me. Well, we were in it. Everyone was caught in it and the small rain would not quiet it. "Goodnight, Catherine," I said out loud. "I hope you sleep well. If it's too uncomfortable, darling, lie on the other side," I said. "I'll get you some cold water. In a little while it will be morning and then it won't be so bad. I'm sorry he makes you so uncomfortable. Try and go to sleep, sweet."

I was asleep all the time, she said. You've been talking in your sleep. Are you all right?

Are you really there?

Of course I'm here. I wouldn't go away. This doesn't make any difference between us.

You're so lovely and sweet. You wouldn't go away in the night, would you?

Of course I wouldn't go away. I'm always here. I come whenever you want me.

"—," Piani said. "They've started again."

"I was dopey," I said. I looked at my watch. It was three o'clock in the morning. I reached back behind the seat for a bottle of the barbera.

"You talked out loud," Piani said.

"I was having a dream in English," I said.

The rain was slacking and we were moving along. Before

daylight we were stalled again and when it was light we were at a little rise in the ground and I saw the road of the retreat stretched out far ahead, everything stationary except for the infantry filtering through. We started to move again but seeing the rate of progress in the daylight, I knew we were going to have to get off that main road some way and go across country if we ever hoped to reach Udine.

In the night many peasants had joined the column from the roads of the country and in the column there were carts loaded with household goods; there were mirrors projecting up between mattresses, and chickens and ducks tied to carts. There was a sewing machine on the cart ahead of us in the rain. They had saved the most valuable things. On some carts the women sat huddled from the rain and others walked beside the carts keeping as close to them as they could. There were dogs now in the column, keeping under the wagons as they moved along. The road was muddy, the ditches at the side were high with water and beyond the trees that lined the road the fields looked too wet and too soggy to try to cross. I got down from the car and worked up the road a way, looking for a place where I could see ahead to find a side-road we could take across country. I knew there were many side-roads but did not want one that would lead to nothing. I could not remember them because we had always passed them bowling along in the car on the main road and they all looked much alike. Now I knew we must find one if we hoped to get through. No one knew where the Austrians were nor how things were going but I was certain that if the rain should stop and planes come over and get to work on that column that it would be all over. All that was needed was for a few men to leave their trucks or a few horses be killed to tie up completely the movement on the road.

The rain was not falling so heavily now and I thought it might clear. I went ahead along the edge of the road and when there was a small road that led off to the north between two fields with a

hedge of trees on both sides, I thought that we had better take it and hurried back to the cars. I told Piani to turn off and went back to tell Bonello and Aymo.

"If it leads nowhere we can turn around and cut back in," I said.

"What about these?" Bonello asked. His two sergeants were beside him on the seat. They were unshaven but still military looking in the early morning.

"They'll be good to push," I said. I went back to Aymo and told him we were going to try it across country.

"What about my virgin family?" Aymo asked. The two girls were asleep.

"They won't be very useful," I said. "You ought to have someone that could push."

"They could go back in the car," Aymo said. "There's room in the car."

"All right if you want them," I said. "Pick up somebody with a wide back to push."

"Bersaglieri," Aymo smiled. "They have the widest backs. They measure them. How do you feel, Tenente?"

"Fine. How are you?"

"Fine. But very hungry."

"There ought to be something up that road and we will stop and eat."

"How's your leg, Tenente?"

"Fine," I said. Standing on the step and looking up ahead could see Piani's car pulling out onto the little side-road and starting up it, his car showing through the hedge of bare branches. Bonello turned off and followed him and then Piani worked his way out and we followed the two ambulances ahead along the narrow road between hedges. It led to a farmhouse. We found Piani and Bonello stopped in the farmyard. The house was low and long with a trellis with a grape-vine over the door. There was a well in the yard and Piani was getting up water to fill his radiator. So much going in low gear

had boiled it out. The farmhouse was deserted. I looked back down the road, the farmhouse was on a slight elevation above the plain, and we could see over the country, and saw the road, the hedges, the fields and the line of trees along the main road where the retreat was passing. The two sergeants were looking through the house. The girls were awake and looking at the courtyard, the well and the two big ambulances in front of the farmhouse, with three drivers at the well. One of the sergeants came out with a clock in his hand.

"Put it back," I said. He looked at me, went in the house and came back without the clock.

"Where's your partner?" I asked.

"He's gone to the latrine." He got up on the seat of the ambulance. He was afraid we would leave him.

"What about breakfast, Tenente?" Bonello asked. "We could eat something. It wouldn't take very long."

"Do you think this road going down on the other side will lead to anything?"

"Sure."

"All right. Let's eat." Piani and Bonello went in the house.

"Come on," Aymo said to the girls. He held his hand to help them down. The older sister shook her head. They were not going into any deserted house. They looked after us.

"They are difficult," Aymo said. We went into the farmhouse together. It was large and dark, an abandoned feeling. Bonello and Piani were in the kitchen.

"There's not much to eat," Piani said. "They've cleaned it out."

Bonello sliced a big cheese on the heavy kitchen table.

"Where was the cheese?"

"In the cellar. Piani found wine too and apples."

"That's a good breakfast."

Piani was taking the wooden cork out of a big wicker-covered wine jug. He tipped it and poured a copper pan full.

“It smells all right,” he said. “Find some beakers, Barto.”

The two sergeants came in.

“Have some cheese, sergeants,” Bonello said.

“We should go,” one of the sergeants said, eating his cheese and drinking a cup of wine.

“We’ll go. Don’t worry,” Bonello said.

“An army travels on its stomach,” I said.

“What?” asked the sergeant.

“It’s better to eat.”

“Yes. But time is precious.”

“I believe the bastards have eaten already,” Piani said. The sergeants looked at him. They hated the lot of us.

“You know the road?” one of them asked me.

“No,” I said. They looked at each other.

“We would do best to start,” the first one said.

“We are starting,” I said. I drank another cup of the red wine. It tasted very good after the cheese and apple.

“Bring the cheese,” I said and went out. Bonello came out carrying the great jug of wine.

“That’s too big,” I said. He looked at it regretfully.

“I guess it is,” he said. “Give me the canteens to fill.” He filled the canteens and some of the wine ran out on the stone paving of the courtyard. Then he picked up the wine jug and put it just inside the door.

“The Austrians can find it without breaking the door down,” he said.

“We’ll roll,” I said. “Piani and I will go ahead.” The two engineers were already on the seat beside Bonello. The girls were eating cheese and apples. Aymo was smoking. We started off down the narrow road. I looked back at the two cars coming and the farmhouse. It was a fine, low, solid stone house and the ironwork of the well was very good. Ahead of us the road was narrow and muddy and there was a high hedge on either side. Behind, the cars

were following closely.

Chapter XXIX

At noon we were stuck in a muddy road about, as nearly as we could figure, ten kilometres from Udine. The rain had stopped during the forenoon and three times we had heard planes coming, seen them pass overhead, watched them go far to the left and heard them bombing on the main highroad. We had worked through a network of secondary roads and had taken many roads that were blind, but had always, by backing up and finding another road, gotten closer to Udine. Now, Aymo's car, in backing so that we might get out of a blind road, had gotten into the soft earth at the side and the wheels, spinning, had dug deeper and deeper until the car rested on its differential. The thing to do now was to dig out in front of the wheels, put in brush so that the chains could grip, and then push until the car was on the road. We were all down on the road around the car. The two sergeants looked at the car and examined the wheels. Then they started off down the road without a word. I went after them.

"Come on," I said. "Cut some brush."

"We have to go," one said.

"Get busy," I said, "and cut brush."

"We have to go," one said. The other said nothing. They were in a hurry to start. They would not look at me.

"I order you to come back to the car and cut brush," I said. The one sergeant turned. "We have to go on. In a little while you will be cut off. You can't order us. You're not our officer."

"I order you to cut brush," I said. They turned and started down the road.

“Halt,” I said. They kept on down the muddy road, the hedge on either side. “I order you to halt,” I called. They went a little faster. I opened up my holster, took the pistol, aimed at the one who had talked the most, and fired. I missed and they both started to run. I shot three times and dropped one. The other went through the hedge and was out of sight. I fired at him through the hedge as he ran across the field. The pistol clicked empty and I put in another clip. I saw it was too far to shoot at the second sergeant. He was far across the field, running, his head held low. I commenced to reload the empty clip. Bonello came up.

“Let me go finish him,” he said. I handed him the pistol and he walked down to where the sergeant of engineers lay face down across the road. Bonello leaned over, put the pistol against the man’s head and pulled the trigger. The pistol did not fire.

“You have to cock it,” I said. He cocked it and fired twice. He took hold of the sergeant’s legs and pulled him to the side of the road so he lay beside the hedge. He came back and handed me the pistol.

“The son of a bitch,” he said. He looked toward the sergeant. “You see me shoot him, Tenente?”

“We’ve got to get the brush quickly,” I said. “Did I hit the other one at all?”

“I don’t think so,” Aymo said. “He was too far away to hit with a pistol.”

“The dirty scum,” Piani said. We were all cutting twigs and branches. Everything had been taken out of the car. Bonello was digging out in front of the wheels. When we were ready Aymo started the car and put it into gear. The wheels spun round throwing brush and mud. Bonello and I pushed until we could feel our joints crack. The car would not move.

“Rock her back and forth, Barto,” I said.

He drove the engine in reverse, then forward. The wheels only dug in deeper. Then the car was resting on the differential again,

and the wheels spun freely in the holes they had dug. I straightened up.

"We'll try her with a rope," I said.

"I don't think it's any use, Tenente. You can't get a straight pull."

"We have to try it," I said. "She won't come out any other way."

Piani's and Bonello's cars could only move straight ahead down the narrow road. We roped both cars together and pulled. The wheels only pulled sideways against the ruts.

"It's no good," I shouted. "Stop it."

Piani and Bonello got down from their cars and came back. Aymo got down. The girls were up the road about forty yards sitting on a stone wall.

"What do you say, Tenente?" Bonello asked.

"We'll dig out and try once more with the brush," I said. I looked down the road. It was my fault. I had led them up here. The sun was almost out from behind the clouds and the body of the sergeant lay beside the hedge.

"We'll put his coat and cape under," I said. Bonello went to get them. I cut brush and Aymo and Piani dug out in front and between the wheels. I cut the cape, then ripped it in two, and laid it under the wheel in the mud, then piled brush for the wheels to catch. We were ready to start and Aymo got up on the seat and started the car. The wheels spun and we pushed and pushed. But it wasn't any use.

"It's —ed," I said. "Is there anything you want in the car, Barto?"

Aymo climbed up with Bonello, carrying the cheese and two bottles of wine and his cape. Bonello, sitting behind the wheel, was looking through the pockets of the sergeant's coat.

"Better throw the coat away," I said. "What about Barto's virgins?"

"They can get in the back," Piani said. "I don't think we are going far."

I opened the back door of the ambulance.

"Come on," I said. "Get in." The two girls climbed in and sat in the corner. They seemed to have taken no notice of the shooting. I looked back up the road. The sergeant lay in his dirty long-sleeved underwear. I got up with Piani and we started. We were going to try to cross the field. When the road entered the field I got down and walked ahead. If we could get across, there was a road on the other side. We could not get across. It was too soft and muddy for the cars. When they were finally and completely stalled, the wheels dug in to the hubs, we left them in the field and started on foot for Udine.

When we came to the road which led back toward the main highway I pointed down it to the two girls.

"Go down there," I said. "You'll meet people." They looked at me. I took out my pocketbook and gave them each a ten-lira note.

"Go down there," I said, pointing. "Friends! Family!"

They did not understand but they held the money tightly and started down the road. They looked back as though they were afraid I might take the money back. I watched them go down the road, their shawls close around them, looking back apprehensively at us. The three drivers were laughing.

"How much will you give me to go in that direction, Tenente?" Bonello asked.

"They're better off in a bunch of people than alone if they catch them," I said.

"Give me two hundred lire and I'll walk straight back toward Austria," Bonello said.

"They'd take it away from you," Piani said.

"Maybe the war will be over," Aymo said. We were going up the road as fast as we could. The sun was trying to come through. Beside the road were mulberry trees. Through the trees 1 could see our two big moving-vans of cars stuck in the field. Piani looked back too.

“They’ll have to build a road to get them out,” he said.

“I wish to Christ we had bicycles,” Bonello said.

“Do they ride bicycles in America?” Aymo asked.

“They used to.”

“Here it is a great thing,” Aymo said. “A bicycle is a splendid thing.”

“I wish to Christ we had bicycles,” Bonello said. “I’m no walker.”

“Is that firing?” I asked. I thought I could hear firing a long way away.

“I don’t know,” Aymo said. He listened.

“I think so,” I said.

“The first thing we will see will be the cavalry,” Piani said.

“I don’t think they’ve got any cavalry.”

“I hope to Christ not,” Bonello said. “I don’t want to be stuck on a lance by any—cavalry.”

“You certainly shot that sergeant, Tenente,” Piani said. We were walking fast.

“I killed him,” Bonello said. “I never killed anybody in this war, and all my life I’ve wanted to kill a sergeant.”

“You killed him on the sit all right,” Piani said. “He wasn’t flying very fast when you killed him.”

“Never mind. That’s one thing I can always remember. I killed that—of a sergeant.”

“What will you say in confession?” Aymo asked.

“I’ll say, ‘Bless me, father, I killed a sergeant.’” They all laughed.

“He’s an anarchist,” Piani said. “He doesn’t go to church.”

“Piani’s an anarchist too,” Bonello said.

“Are you really anarchists?” I asked.

“No, Tenente. We’re socialists. We come from Imola.”

“Haven’t you ever been there?”

“No.”

“By Christ it’s a fine place, Tenente. You come there after the

war and we'll show you something."

"Are you all socialists?"

"Everybody."

"Is it a fine town?"

"Wonderful. You never saw a town like that."

"How did you get to be socialists?"

"We're all socialists. Everybody is a socialist. We've always been socialists."

"You come, Tenente. We'll make you a socialist too."

Ahead the road turned off to the left and there was a little hill and, beyond a stone wall, an apple orchard. As the road went uphill they ceased talking. We walked along together all going fast against time.

Chapter XXX

Later we were on a road that led to a river. There was a long line of abandoned trucks and carts on the road leading up to the bridge. No one was in sight. The river was high and the bridge had been blown up in the centre; the stone arch was fallen into the river and the brown water was going over it. We went on up the bank looking for a place to cross. Up ahead I knew there was a railway bridge and I thought we might be able to get across there. The path was wet and muddy. We did not see any troops; only abandoned trucks and stores. Along the river bank there was nothing and no one but the wet brush and muddy ground. We went up to the bank and finally we saw the railway bridge.

"What a beautiful bridge," Aymo said. It was a long plain iron bridge across what was usually a dry river-bed.

"We'd better hurry and get across before they blow it up," said.

"There's nobody to blow it up," Piani said. "They're all gone."

"It's probably mined," Bonello said. "You cross first, Tenente."

"Listen to the anarchist," Aymo said. "Make him go first."

"I'll go," I said. "It won't be mined to blow up with one man."

"You see," Piani said. "That is brains. Why haven't you brains, anarchist?"

"If I had brains I wouldn't be here," Bonello said.

"That's pretty good, Tenente," Aymo said.

"That's pretty good," I said. We were close to the bridge now. The sky had clouded over again and it was raining a little. The bridge looked long and solid. We climbed up the embankment.

"Come one at a time," I said and started across the bridge. I

watched the ties and the rails for any trip-wires or signs of explosive but I saw nothing. Down below the gaps in the ties the river ran muddy and fast. Ahead across the wet countryside I could see Udine in the rain. Across the bridge I looked back. Just up the river was another bridge. As I watched, a yellow mud-colored motor car crossed it. The sides of the bridge were high and the body of the car, once on, was out of sight. But I saw the heads of the driver, the man on the seat with him, and the two men on the rear seat. They all wore German helmets. Then the car was over the bridge and out of sight behind the trees and the abandoned vehicles on the road. I waved to Aymo who was crossing and to the others to come on. I climbed down and crouched beside the railway embankment. Aymo came down with me.

"Did you see the car?" I asked.

"No. We were watching you."

"A German staff car crossed on the upper bridge."

"A staff car?"

"Yes."

"Holy Mary."

The others came and we all crouched in the mud behind the embankment, looking across the rails at the bridge, the line of trees, the ditch and the road.

"Do you think we're cut off then, Tenente?"

"I don't know. All I know is a German staff car went along that road."

"You don't feel funny, Tenente? You haven't got strange feelings in the head?"

"Don't be funny, Bonello."

"What about a drink?" Piani asked. "If we're cut off we might as well have a drink." He unhooked his canteen and uncorked it.

"Look! Look!" Aymo said and pointed toward the road. Along the top of the stone bridge we could see German helmets moving. They were bent forward and moved smoothly, almost

supernaturally, along. As they came off the bridge we saw them. They were bicycle troops. I saw the faces of the first two. They were ruddy and healthy-looking. Their helmets came low down over their foreheads and the side of their faces. Their carbines were clipped to the frame of the bicycles. Stick bombs hung handle down from their belts. Their helmets and their gray uniforms were wet and they rode easily, looking ahead and to both sides. There were two-then four in line, then two, then almost a dozen; then another dozen-then one alone. They did not talk but we could not have heard them because of the noise from the river. They were gone out of sight up the road.

"Holy Mary," Aymo said.

"They were Germans," Piani said. "Those weren't Austrians."

"Why isn't there somebody here to stop them?" I said. "Why haven't they blown the bridge up? Why aren't there machine guns along this embankment?"

"You tell us, Tenente," Bonello said.

I was very angry.

"The whole bloody thing is crazy. Down below they blow up a little bridge. Here they leave a bridge on the main road. Where is everybody? Don't they try and stop them at all?"

"You tell us, Tenente," Bonello said. I shut up. It was none of my business; all I had to do was to get to Pordenone with three ambulances. I had failed at that. All I had to do now was get to Pordenone. I probably could not even get to Udine. The hell I couldn't. The thing to do was to be calm and not get shot or captured.

"Didn't you have a canteen open?" I asked Piani. He handed it to me. I took a long drink. "We might as well start," I said. "There's no hurry though. Do you want to eat something?"

"This is no place to stay," Bonello said.

"All right. We'll start."

"Should we keep on this side-out of sight?"

"We'd be better off on top. They may come along this bridge too. We don't want them on top of us before we see them."

We walked along the railroad track. On both sides of us stretched the wet plain. Ahead across the plain was the hill of Udine. The roofs fell away from the castle on the hill. We could see the campanile and the clock-tower. There were many mulberry trees in the fields. Ahead I saw a place where the rails were torn up. The ties had been dug out too and thrown down the embankment.

"Down! down!" Aymo said. We dropped down beside the embankment. There was another group of bicyclists passing along the road. I looked over the edge and saw them go on.

"They saw us but they went on," Aymo said.

"We'll get killed up there, Tenente," Bonello said.

"They don't want us," I said. "They're after something else. We're in more danger if they should come on us suddenly."

"I'd rather walk here out of sight," Bonello said.

"All right. We'll walk along the tracks."

"Do you think we can get through?" Aymo asked.

"Sure. There aren't very many of them yet. We'll go through in the dark."

"What was that staff car doing?"

"Christ knows," I said. We kept on up the tracks. Bonello tired of walking in the mud of the embankment and came up with the rest of us. The railway moved south away from the highway now and we could not see what passed along the road. A short bridge over a canal was blown up but we climbed across on what was left of the span. We heard firing ahead of us.

We came up on the railway beyond the canal. It went on straight toward the town across the low fields. We could see the line of the other railway ahead of us. To the north was the main road where we had seen the cyclists; to the south there was a small branch-road across the fields with thick trees on each side. I thought we had better cut to the south and work around the town that way and

across country toward Campoformio and the main road to the Tagliamento. We could avoid the main line of the retreat by keeping to the secondary roads beyond Udine. I knew there were plenty of side-roads across the plain. I started down the embankment.

"Come on," I said. We would make for the side-road and work to the south of the town. We all started down the embankment. A shot was fired at us from the side-road. The bullet went into the mud of the embankment.

"Go on back," I shouted. I started up the embankment, slipping in the mud. The drivers were ahead of me. I went up the embankment as fast as I could go. Two more shots came from the thick brush and Aymo, as he was crossing the tracks, lurched, tripped and fell face down. We pulled him down on the other side and turned him over. "His head ought to be uphill," I said. Piani moved him around. He lay in the mud on the side of the embankment, his feet pointing downhill, breathing blood irregularly. The three of us squatted over him in the rain. He was hit low in the back of the neck and the bullet had ranged upward and come out under the right eye. He died while I was stopping up the two holes. Piani laid his head down, wiped at his face, with a piece of the emergency dressing, then let it alone.

"The —," he said.

"They weren't Germans," I said. "There can't be any Germans over there."

"Italians," Piani said, using the word as an epithet, "Italiani!" Bonello said nothing. He was sitting beside Aymo, not looking at him. Piani picked up Aymo's cap where it had rolled down the embankment and put it over his face. He took out his canteen.

"Do you want a drink?" Piani handed Bonello the canteen.

"No," Bonello said. He turned to me. 'That might have happened to us any time on the railway tracks."

"No," I said. "It was because we started across the field."

Bonello shook his head. “Aymo’s dead,” he said. “Who’s dead next, Tenente? Where do we go now?”

“Those were Italians that shot,” I said. “They weren’t Germans.”

“l suppose if they were Germans they’d have killed all of us,” Bonello said.

“We are in more danger from Italians than Germans,” I said. “The rear guard are afraid of everything. The Germans know what they’re after.”

“You reason it out, Tenente,” Bonello said.

“Where do we go now?” Piani asked.

“We better lie up some place till it’s dark. If we could get south we’d be all right.”

“They’d have to shoot us all to prove they were right the first time,” Bonello said. “I’m not going to try them.”

“We’ll find a place to lie up as near to Udine as we can get and then go through when it’s dark.”

“Let’s go then,” Bonello said. We went down the north side of the embankment. I looked back. Aymo lay in the mud with the angle of the embankment. He was quite small and his arms were by his side, his puttee-wrapped legs and muddy boots together, his cap over his face. He looked very dead. It was raining. I had liked him as well as anyone I ever knew. I had his papers in my pocket and would write to his family. Ahead across the fields was a farm-house. There were trees around it and the farm buildings were built against the house. There was a balcony along the second floor held up by columns.

“We better keep a little way apart,” I said. “I’ll go ahead.” I started toward the farmhouse. There was a path across the field.

Crossing the field, I did not know but that someone would fire on us from the trees near the farmhouse or from the farmhouse itself. I walked toward it, seeing it very clearly. The balcony of the second floor merged into the barn and there was hay coming out between the columns. The courtyard was of stone blocks and all the

trees were dripping with the rain. There was a big empty two-wheeled cart, the shafts tipped high up in the rain. I came to the courtyard, crossed it, and stood under the shelter of the balcony. The door of the house was open and I went in. Bonello and Piani came in after me. It was dark inside. I went back to the kitchen. There were ashes of a fire on the big open hearth. The pots hung over the ashes, but they were empty. I looked around but I could not find anything to eat.

"We ought to lie up in the barn," I said. "Do you think you could find anything to eat, Piani, and bring it up there?"

"I'll look," Piani said.

"I'll look too," Bonello said.

"All right," I said. "I'll go up and look at the barn." I found a stone stairway that went up from the stable underneath. The stable smelt dry and pleasant in the rain. The cattle were all gone, probably driven off when they left. The barn was half full of hay. There were two windows in the roof, one was blocked with boards, the other was a narrow dormer window on the north side. There was a chute so that hay might be pitched down to the cattle. Beams crossed the opening down into the main floor where the hay-carts drove in when the hay was hauled in to be pitched up. I heard the rain on the roof and smelled the hay and, when I went down, the clean smell of dried dung in the stable. We could pry a board loose and see out of the south window down into the courtyard. The other window looked out on the field toward the north. We could get out of either window onto the roof and down, or go down the hay chute if the stairs were impractical. It was a big barn and we could hide in the hay if we heard anyone. It seemed like a good place. I was sure we could have gotten through to the south if they had not fired on us. It was impossible that there were Germans there. They were coming from the north and down the road from Cividale. They could not have come through from the south. The Italians were even more dangerous. They were frightened and firing

on anything they saw. Last night on the retreat we had heard that there had been many Germans in Italian uniforms mixing with the retreat in the north. I did not believe it. That was one of those things you always heard in the war. It was one of the things the enemy always did to you. You did not know anyone who went over in German uniform to confuse them. Maybe they did but it sounded difficult. I did not believe the Germans did it. I did not believe they had to. There was no need to confuse our retreat. The size of the army and the fewness of the roads did that. Nobody gave any orders, let alone Germans. Still, they would shoot us for Germans. They shot Aymo. The hay smelled good and lying in a barn in the hay took away all the years in between. We had lain in hay and talked and shot sparrows with an air-rifle when they perched in the triangle cut high up in the wall of the barn. The barn was gone now and one year they had cut the hemlock woods and there were only stumps, dried tree-tops, branches and fireweed where the woods had been. You could not go back. If you did not go forward what happened? You never got back to Milan. And if you got back to Milan what happened? I listened to the firing to the north toward Udine. I could hear machine gun firing. There was no shelling. That was something. They must have gotten some troops along the road. I looked down in the half-light of the hay-barn and saw Piani standing on the hauling floor. He had a long sausage, a jar of something and two bottles of wine under his arm.

"Come up," I said. "There is the ladder." Then I realized that I should help him with the things and went down. I was vague in the head from lying in the hay. I had been nearly asleep.

"Where's Bonello?" I asked.

"I'll tell you," Piani said. We went up the ladder. Up on the hay we set the things down. Piani took out his knife with the corkscrew and drew the cork on a wine bottle.

"They have sealing-wax on it," he said. "It must be good." He smiled.

“Where’s Bonello?” I asked.

Piani looked at me.

“He went away, Tenente,” he said. “He wanted to be a prisoner.”

I did not say anything.

“He was afraid we would get killed.”

I held the bottle of wine and did not say anything.

‘’You see we don’t believe in the war anyway, Tenente.”

“Why didn’t you go?” I asked.

“I did not want to leave you.”

“Where did he go?”

“I don’t know, Tenente. He went away.”

“All right,” I said. “Will you cut the sausage?”

Piani looked at me in the half-light.

“I cut it while we were talking,” he said. We sat in the hay and ate the sausage and drank the wine. It must have been wine they had saved for a wedding. It was so old that it was losing its color.

“You look out of this window, Luigi,” I said. “I’ll go look out the other window.”

We had each been drinking out of one of the bottles and I took my bottle with me and went over and lay flat on the hay and looked out the narrow window at the wet country. I do not know what I expected to see but I did not see anything except the fields and the bare mulberry trees and the rain falling. I drank the wine and it did not make me feel good. They had kept it too long and it had gone to pieces and lost its quality and color. I watched it get dark outside; the darkness came very quickly. It would be a black night with the rain. When it was dark there was no use watching anymore, so I went over to Piani. He was lying asleep and I did not wake him but sat down beside him for a while. He was a big man and he slept heavily. After a while I woke him and we started.

That was a very strange night. I do not know what I had expected, death perhaps and shooting in the dark and running, but nothing happened. We waited, lying flat beyond the ditch along the

main road while a German battalion passed, then when they were gone we crossed the road and went on to the north. We were very close to Germans twice in the rain but they did not see us. We got past the town to the north without seeing any Italians, then after a while came on the main channels of the retreat and walked all night toward the Tagliamento. I had not realized how gigantic the retreat was. The whole country was moving, as well as the army. We walked all night, making better time than the vehicles My leg ached and I was tired but we made good time. It seemed so silly for Bonello to have decided to be taken prisoner. There was no danger. We had walked through two armies without incident. If Aymo had not been killed there would never have seemed to be any danger. No one had bothered us when we were in plain sight along the railway. The killing came suddenly and unreasonably. wondered where Bonello was.

"How do you feel, Tenente?" Piani asked. We were going along the side of a road crowded with vehicles and troops.

"Fine."

"I'm tired of this walking."

"Well, all we have to do is walk now. We don't have to worry."

"Bonello was a fool."

"He was a fool all right."

"What will you do about him, Tenente?"

"I don't know."

"Can't you just put him down as taken prisoner?"

"I don't know."

"You see if the war went on they would make bad trouble for his family."

"The war won't go on," a soldier said. "We're going home. The war is over. "

"Everybody's going home."

"We're all going home."

"Come on, Tenente," Piani said. He wanted to get past them.

“Tenente? Who’s a Tenente? A *basso gli ufficiali!* Down with the officers!”

Piani took me by the arm. “I better call you by your name,” he said. “They might try and make trouble. They’ve shot some officers.” We worked up past them.

“I won’t make a report that will make trouble for his family.” I went on with our conversation.

“If the war is over it makes no difference,” Piani said. “But I don’t believe it’s over. It’s too good that it should be over.”

“We’ll know pretty soon,” I said.

“I don’t believe it’s over. They all think it’s over but I don’t believe it.”

“Viva la Pace!” a soldier shouted out. “We’re going home!”

“It would be fine if we all went home,” Piani said. “Wouldn’t you like to go home?”

“Yes.”

“We’ll never go. I don’t think it’s over.”

“Andiamo a casa!” a soldier shouted.

“They throwaway their rifles,” Piani said. “They take them off and drop them down while they’re marching. Then they shout.”

“They ought to keep their rifles.”

“They think if they throwaway their rifles they can’t make them fight.”

In the dark and the rain, making our way along the side of the road I could see that many of the troops still had their rifles. They stuck up above the capes.

“What brigade are you?” an officer called out.

“Brigata di Pace,” someone shouted. “Peace Brigade!” The officer said nothing.

“What does he say? What does the officer say?”

“Down with the officer. *Viva la Pace!”*

“Come on,” Piani said. We passed two British ambulances, abandoned in the block of vehicles.

“They’re from Gorizia,” Piani said. “I know the cars.”

“They got further than we did.”

“They started earlier.”

“I wonder where the drivers are?”

“Up ahead probably.”

“The Germans have stopped outside Udine,” I said. “These people will all get across the river.”

“Yes,” Piani said. “That’s why I think the war will go on.”

“The Germans could come on,” I said. “I wonder why they don’t come on.”

“I don’t know. I don’t know anything about this kind of war.”

“They have to wait for their transport I suppose.”

“I don’t know,” Piani said. Alone he was much gentler. When he was with the others he was a very rough talker.

“Are you married, Luigi?”

“You know I am married.”

“Is that why you did not want to be a prisoner?”

“That is one reason. Are you married, Tenente?”

“No.”

“Neither is Bonello.”

“You can’t tell anything by a man’s being married. But I should think a married man would want to get back to his wife,” I said. I would be glad to talk about wives.

“Yes.”

“How are your feet?”

“They’re sore enough.”

Before daylight we reached the bank of the Tagliamento and followed down along the flooded river to the bridge where all the traffic was crossing.

“They ought to be able to hold at this river,” Piani said. In the dark the flood looked high. The water swirled and it was wide. The wooden bridge was nearly three-quarters of a mile across, and the river, that usually ran in narrow channels in the wide stony bed far

below the bridge, was close under the wooden planking. We went along the bank and then worked our way into the crowd that were crossing the bridge. Crossing slowly in the rain a few feet above the flood, pressed tight in the crowd, the box of an artillery caisson just head, I looked over the side and watched the river. Now that we could not go our own pace I felt very tired. There was no exhilaration in crossing the bridge. I wondered what it would be like if a plane bombed it in the daytime.

"Piani," I said.

"Here I am, Tenente." He was a little ahead in the jam. No one was talking. They were all trying to get across as soon as they could: thinking only of that. We were almost across. At the far end of the bridge there were officers and carabinieri standing on both sides flashing lights. I saw them silhouetted against the sky-line. As we came close to them I saw one of the officers point to a man in the column. A carabiniere went in after him and came out holding the man by the arm. He took him away from the road. We came almost opposite them. The officers were scrutinizing everyone in the column, sometimes speaking to each other, going forward to flash a light in someone's face. They took someone else out just before we came opposite. I saw the man. He was a lieu- tenant-colonel. I saw the stars in the box on his sleeve as they flashed a light on him. His hair was gray and he was short and fat. The carabiniere pulled him in behind the line of officers. As we came opposite I saw one or two of them look at me. Then one pointed at me and spoke to a carabiniere. I saw the carabiniere start for me, come through the edge of the column toward me, then felt him take me by the collar.

"What's the matter with you?" I said and hit him in the face. I saw his face under the hat, upturned mustaches and blood coming down his cheek. Another one dove in toward us.

"What's the matter with you?" I said. He did not answer. He was watching a chance to grab me. I put my arm behind me to loosen

my pistol.

"Don't you know you can't touch an officer?"

The other one grabbed me from behind and pulled my arm up so that it twisted in the socket. I turned with him and the other one grabbed me around the neck. I kicked his shins and got my left knee into his groin.

"Shoot him if he resists," I heard someone say.

"What's the meaning of this?" I tried to shout but my voice was not very loud. They had me at the side of the road now.

"Shoot him if he resists," an officer said. "Take him over back."

"Who are you?"

"You'll find out."

"Who are you?"

"Battle police," another officer said.

"Why don't you ask me to step over instead of having one of these airplanes grab me?"

They did not answer. They did not have to answer. They were battle police.

"Take him back there with the others," the first officer said.

"You see. He speaks Italian with an accent."

"So do you, you — ," I said.

"Take him back with the others," the first officer said. They took me down behind the line of officers below the road toward a group of people in a field by the river bank. As we walked toward them shots were fired. I saw flashes of the rifles and heard the reports. We came up to the group. There were four officers standing together, with a man in front of them with a carabiniere on each side of him. A group of men were standing guarded by carabinieri. Four other carabinieri stood near the questioning officers, leaning on their carbines. They were wide-hatted carabinieri. The two who had me shoved me in with the group waiting to be questioned. I looked at the man the officers were questioning. He was the fat gray-haired little lieutenant-colonel they had taken out of the

column. The questioners had all the efficiency, coldness and command of themselves of Italians who are firing and are not being fired on.

"Your brigade?"

He told them.

"Regiment?"

He told them.

"Why are you not with your regiment?"

He told them.

"Do you not know that an officer should be with his troops?"

He did.

That was all. Another officer spoke.

"It is you and such as you that have let the barbarians onto the sacred soil of the fatherland."

"I beg your pardon," said the lieutenant-colonel.

"It is because of treachery such as yours that we have lost the fruits of victory."

"Have you ever been in a retreat?" the lieutenant-colonel asked.

"Italy should never retreat."

We stood there in the rain and listened to this. We were facing the officers and the prisoner stood in front and a little to one side of us.

"If you are going to shoot me," the lieutenant-colonel said, "please shoot me at once without further questioning. The questioning is stupid." He made the sign of the cross. The officers spoke together. One wrote something on a pad of paper.

"Abandoned his troops, ordered to be shot," he said.

Two carabinieri took the lieutenant-colonel to the river bank. He walked in the rain, an old man with his hat off, a carabinieri on either side. I did not watch them shoot him but I heard the shots. They were questioning someone else. This officer too was separated from his troops. He was not allowed to make an explanation. He cried when they read the sentence from the pad of paper, and they

were questioning another when they shot him. They made a point of being intent on questioning the next man while the man who had been questioned before was being shot. In this way there was obviously nothing they could do about it. I did not know whether I should wait to be questioned or make a break now. I was obviously a German in Italian uniform. I saw how their minds worked; if they had minds and if they worked. They were all young men and they were saving their country. The second army was being re-formed beyond the Tagliamento. They were executing officers of the rank of major and above who were separated from their troops. They were also dealing summarily with German agitators in Italian uniform. They wore steel helmets. Only two of us had steel helmets. Some of the carabinieri had them. The other carabinieri wore the wide hat. Airplanes we called them. We stood in the rain and were taken out one at a time to be questioned and shot. So far they had shot everyone they had questioned. The questioners had that beautiful detachment and devotion to stern justice of men dealing in death without being in any danger of it. They were questioning a full colonel of a line regiment. Three more officers had just been put in with us.

"Where was his regiment?"

I looked at the carabinieri. They were looking at the newcomers. The others were looking at the colonel. I ducked down, pushed between two men, and ran for the river, my head down. I tripped at the edge and went in with a splash. The water was very cold and I stayed under as long as I could. I could feel the current swirl me and I stayed under until I thought I could never come up. The minute I came up I took a breath and went down again. It was easy to stay under with so much clothing and my boots. When I came up the second time I saw a piece of timber ahead of me and reached it and held on with one hand. I kept my head behind it and did not even look over it. I did not want to see the bank. There were shots when I ran and shots when I came up the first time. I heard them

when I was almost above water. There were no shots now. The piece of timber swung in the current and I held it with one hand. I looked at the bank. It seemed to be going by very fast. There was much wood in the stream. The water was very cold. We passed the brush of an island above the water. I held onto the timber with both hands and let it take me along. The shore was out of sight now.

Chapter XXXI

You do not know how long you are in a river when the current moves swiftly. It seems a long time and it may be very short. The water was cold and in flood and many things passed that had been floated off the banks when the river rose. I was lucky to have a heavy timber to hold on to, and I lay in the icy water with my chin on the wood, holding as easily as I could with both hands. I was afraid of cramps and I hoped we would move toward the shore. We went down the river in a long curve. It was beginning to be light enough so I could see the bushes along the shore-line. There was a brush island ahead and the current moved toward the shore. I wondered if I should take off my boots and clothes and try to swim ashore, but decided not to. I had never thought of anything but that I would reach the shore some way, and I would be in a bad position if I landed barefoot. I had to get to Mestre some way.

I watched the shore come close, then swing away, then come closer again. We were floating more slowly. The shore was very close now. I could see twigs on the willow bush. The timber swung slowly so that the bank was behind me and I knew we were in an eddy. We went slowly around. As I saw the bank again, very close tried holding with one arm and kicking and swimming the timber toward the bank with the other, but I did not bring it any closer. I was afraid we would move out of the eddy and, holding with one hand, I drew up my feet so they were against the side of the timber and shoved hard toward the bank. I could see the brush, but even with my momentum and swimming as hard as I could, the current was taking me away. I thought then I would drown because of my

boots, but I thrashed and fought through the water, and when I looked up the bank was coming toward me, and I kept thrashing and swimming in a heavy-footed panic until I reached it. I hung to the willow branch and did not have strength to pull myself up but I knew I would not drown now. It had never occurred to me on the timber that I might drown. I felt hollow and sick in my stomach and chest from the effort, and I held to the branches and waited. When the sick feeling was gone I pulled into the willow bushes and rested again, my arms around some brush, holding tight with my hands to the branches. Then I crawled out, pushed on through the willows and onto the bank. It was half-daylight and I saw no one. I lay flat on the bank and heard the river and the rain.

After a while I got up and started along the bank. I knew there was no bridge across the river until Latisana. I thought I might be opposite San Vito. I began to think out what I should do. Ahead there was a ditch running into the river. I went toward it. So far I had seen no one and I sat down by some bushes along the bank of the ditch and took off my shoes and emptied them of water. I took off my coat, took my wallet with my papers and my money all wet in it out of the inside pocket and then wrung the coat out. I took off my trousers and wrung them too, then my shirt and under clothing. I slapped and rubbed myself and then dressed again. I had lost my cap.

Before I put on my coat I cut the cloth stars off my sleeves and put them in the inside pocket with my money. My money was wet but was all right. I counted it. There were three thousand and some lire. My clothes felt wet and clammy and I slapped my arms to keep the circulation going. I had woven underwear and I did not think I would catch cold if I kept moving. They had taken my pistol at the road and I put the holster under my coat. I had no cape and it was cold in the rain. I started up the bank of the canal. It was daylight and the country was wet, low and dismal looking. The fields were bare and wet; a long way away I could see a campanile rising out of

the plain. I came up onto a road. Ahead I saw some troops coming down the road. I limped along the side of the road and they passed me and paid no attention to me. They were a machine gun detachment going up toward the river. I went on down the road.

That day I crossed the Venetian plain. It is a low level country and under the rain it is even flatter. Toward the sea there are salt marshes and very few roads. The roads all go along the river mouths to the sea and to cross the country you must go along the paths beside the canals. I was working across the country from the north to the south and had crossed two railway lines and many roads and finally I came out at the end of a path onto a railway line where it ran beside a marsh. It was the main line from Venice to Trieste, with a high solid embankment, a solid roadbed and double track. Down the tracks a way was a flag-station and I could see soldiers on guard. Up the line there was a bridge over a stream that flowed into the marsh. I could see a guard too at the bridge. Crossing the fields to the north I had seen a train pass on this railroad, visible a long way across the flat plain, and I thought a train might come from Portogruaro. I watched the guards and lay down on the embankment so that I could see both ways along the track. The guard at the bridge walked a way up the line toward where I lay, then turned and went back toward the bridge. I lay, and was hungry, and waited for the train. The one I had seen was so long that the engine moved it very slowly and I was sure I could get aboard it. After I had almost given up hoping for one I saw a train coming. The engine, coming straight on, grew larger slowly. I looked at the guard at the bridge. He was walking on the near side of the bridge but on the other side of the tracks. That would put him out of sight when the train passed. I watched the engine come nearer. It was working hard. I could see there were many cars. I knew there would be guards on the train, and I tried to see where they were, but, keeping out of sight, I could not. The engine was almost to where I was lying. When it came opposite, working and

puffing even on the level, and I saw the engineer pass, I stood up and stepped up close to the passing cars. If the guards were watching I was a less suspicious object standing beside the track. Several closed freight-cars passed. Then I saw a low open car of the sort they call gondolas coming, covered with canvas. I stood until it had almost passed, then jumped and caught the rear hand-rods and pulled up. I crawled down between the gondola and the shelter of the high freight-car behind. I did not think anyone had seen me. I was holding to the hand-rods and crouching low, my feet on the coupling. We were almost opposite the bridge. I remembered the guard. As we passed him he looked at me. He was a boy and his helmet was too big for him. I stared at him contemptuously and he looked away. He thought I had something to do with the train.

We were past. I saw him still looking uncomfortable, watching the other cars pass and I stooped to see how the canvas was fastened. It had grummets and was laced down at the edge with cord. I took out my knife, cut the cord and put my arm under. There were hard bulges under the canvas that tightened in the rain. I looked up and ahead. There was a guard on the freight-car ahead but he was looking forward. I let go of the hand-rails and ducked under the canvas. My forehead hit something that gave me a violent bump and I felt blood on my face but I crawled on in and lay flat. Then I turned around and fastened down the canvas.

I was in under the canvas with guns. They smelled cleanly of oil and grease. I lay and listened to the rain on the canvas and the clicking of the car over the rails. There was a little light came through and I lay and looked at the guns. They had their canvas jackets on. I thought they must have been sent ahead from the third army. The bump on my forehead was swollen and I stopped the bleeding by lying still and letting it coagulate, then picked away the dried blood except over the cut. It was nothing. I had no handkerchief, but feeling with my fingers I washed away where the dried blood had been, with rainwater that dripped from the canvas,

and wiped it clean with the sleeve of my coat. I did not want to look conspicuous. I knew I would have to get out before they got to Mestre because they would be taking care of these guns. They had no guns to lose or forget about. I was terrifically hungry.

Chapter XXXII

Lying on the floor of the flat-car with the guns beside me under the canvas I was wet, cold and very hungry. Finally I rolled over and lay flat on my stomach with my head on my arms. My knee was stiff, but it had been very satisfactory. Valentini had done a fine job. I had done half the retreat on foot and swum part of the Tagliamento with his knee. It was his knee all right. The other knee was mine. Doctors did things to you and then it was not your body anymore. The head was mine, and the inside of the belly. It was very hungry in there. I could feel it turn over on itself. The head was mine, but not to use, not to think with, only to remember and not too much remember.

I could remember Catherine but I knew I would get crazy if I thought about her when I was not sure yet I would see her, so I would not think about her, only about her a little, only about her with the car going slowly and clickingly, and some light through the canvas and my lying with Catherine on the floor of the car. Hard as the floor of the car to lie not thinking only feeling, having been away too long, the clothes wet and the floor moving only a little each time and lonesome inside and alone with wet clothing and hard floor for a wife.

You did not love the floor of a flat-car nor guns with canvas jackets and the smell of vaselined metal or a canvas that rain leaked through, although it is very fine under a canvas and pleasant with guns; but you loved someone else whom now you knew was not even to be pretended there; you seeing now very clearly and coldly-not so coldly as clearly and emptily. You saw emptily, lying on your

stomach, having been present when one army moved back and another came forward. You had lost your cars and your men as a floorwalker loses the stock of his department in a fire. There was, however, no insurance. You were out of it now. You had no more obligation. If they shot floorwalkers after a fire in the department store because they spoke with an accent they had always had, then certainly the floorwalkers would not be expected to return when the store opened again for business. They might seek other employment; if there was any other employment and the police did not get them.

Anger was washed away in the river along with any obligation. Although that ceased when the carabiniere put his hands on my collar. I would like to have had the uniform off although I did not care much about the outward forms. I had taken off the stars, but that was for convenience. It was no point of honor. I was not against them. I was through. I wished them all the luck. There were the good ones, and the brave ones, and the calm ones and the sensible ones, and they deserved it. But it was not my show anymore and I wished this bloody train would get to Mestre and I would eat and stop thinking. I would have to stop.

Piani would tell them they had shot me. They went through the pockets and took the papers of the people they shot. They would not have my papers. They might call me drowned. I wondered what they would hear in the States. Dead from wounds and other causes. Good Christ I was hungry. I wondered what had become of the priest at the mess.

And Rinaldi. He was probably at Pordenone. If they had not gone further back. Well, I would never see him now. I would never see any of them now. That life was over. I did not think he had syphilis. It was not a serious disease anyway if you took it in time, they said. But he would worry. I would worry too if I had it. Anyone would worry.

I was not made to think. I was made to eat. My God, yes. Eat

and drink and sleep with Catherine. Tonight maybe. No that was impossible. But tomorrow night, and a good meal and sheets and never going away again except together. Probably have to go damned quickly. She would go. I knew she would go. When would we go? That was something to think about. It was getting dark. I lay and thought where we would go. There were many places.

BOOK FOUR

Chapter XXXIII

I dropped off the train in Milan as it slowed to come into the station early in the morning before it was light. I crossed the track and came out between some buildings and down onto the street. A wine shop was open and I went in for some coffee. It smelled of early morning, of swept dust, spoons in coffee-glasses and the wet circles left by wine-glasses. The proprietor was behind the bar. Two soldiers sat at a table. I stood at the bar and drank a glass of coffee and ate a piece of bread. The coffee was gray with milk, and I skimmed the milk scum off the top with a piece of bread. The proprietor looked at me.

"You want a glass of grappa?"

"No thanks."

"On me," he said and poured a small glass and pushed it toward me. "What's happening at the front?"

"I would not know."

"They are drunk," he said, moving his hand toward the two soldiers. I could believe him. They looked drunk.

"Tell me," he said, "what is happening at the front?"

"I would not know about the front."

"I saw you come down the wall. You came off the train."

"There is a big retreat."

"I read the papers. What happens? Is it over?"

"I don't think so."

He filled the glass with grappa from a short bottle. "If you are in trouble," he said, "I can keep you."

"I am not in trouble."

“If you are in trouble stay here with me.”

“Where does one stay?”

“In the building. Many stay here. Any who are in trouble stay here.”

“Are many in trouble?”

“It depends on the trouble. You are a South American?”

“No.”

“Speak Spanish?”

“A little.”

He wiped off the bar.

“It is hard now to leave the country but in no way impossible.”

“I have no wish to leave.”

“You can stay here as long as you want. You will see what sort of man I am.”

“I have to go this morning but I will remember the address to return.”

He shook his head. “You won’t come back if you talk like that. I thought you were in real trouble.”

“I am in no trouble. But I value the address of a friend.”

I put a ten-lira note on the bar to pay for the coffee.

“Have a grappa with me,” I said.

“It is not necessary.”

“Have one.”

He poured the two glasses.

“Remember,” he said. “Come here. Do not let other people take you in. Here you are all right.”

“I am sure.”

“You are sure?”

“Yes.”

He was serious. “Then let me tell you one thing. Do not go about with that coat.”

“Why?”

“On the sleeves it shows very plainly where the stars have been

cut away. The cloth is a different color." I did not say anything.

"If you have no papers I can give you papers."

"What papers?"

"Leave-papers."

"I have no need for papers. I have papers."

"All right," he said. "But if you need papers I can get what you wish."

"How much are such papers?"

"It depends on what they are. The price is reasonable."

"I don't need any now."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm all right," I said.

When I went out he said, "Don't forget that I am your friend."

"No."

"I will see you again," he said.

"Good," I said.

Outside I kept away from the station, where there were military police, and picked up a cab at the edge of the little park. I gave the driver the address of the hospital. At the hospital I went to the porter's lodge. His wife embraced me. He shook my hand .

"You are back. You are safe."

"Yes."

"Have you had breakfast?"

"Yes."

"How are you, Tenente? How are you?" the wife asked.

"Fine."

"Won't you have breakfast with us?"

"No, thank you. Tell me is Miss Barkley here at the hospital now?"

"Miss Barkley?"

"The English lady nurse."

"His girl," the wife said. She patted my arm and smiled.

"No," the porter said. "She is away."

My heart went down. “You are sure? I mean the tall blonde English young lady.”

“I am sure. She is gone to Stresa.”

“When did she go?”

“She went two days ago with the other lady English.”

“Good,” I said. “I wish you to do something for me. Do not tell anyone you have seen me. It is very important.”

“I won’t tell anyone,” the porter said. I gave him a ten-lira note. He pushed it away.

“I promise you I will tell no one,” he said. “I don’t want any money.”

“What can we do for you, Signor Tenente?” his wife asked.

“Only that,” I said.

“We are dumb,” the porter said. “You will let me know anything I can do?”

“Yes,” I said. “Goodbye. I will see you again.”

They stood in the door, looking after me.

I got into the cab and gave the driver the address of Simmons, one of the men I knew who was studying singing.

Simmons lived a long way out in the town toward the Porta Magenta. He was still in bed and sleepy when I went to see him.

“You get up awfully early, Henry,” he said.

“I came in on the early train.”

“What’s all this retreat? Were you at the front? Will you have a cigarette? They’re in that box on the table.” It was a big room with a bed beside the wall, a piano over on the far side and a dresser and table. I sat on a chair by the bed. Simmons sat propped up by the pillows and smoked.

“I’m in a jam, Sim,” I said.

“So am I,” he said. “I’m always in a jam. Won’t you smoke?”

“No,” I said. “What’s the procedure in going to Switzerland?”

“For you? The Italians wouldn’t let you out of the country.”

“Yes. I know that. But the Swiss. What will they do?”

“They intern you.”

“I know. But what’s the mechanics of it?”

“Nothing. It’s very simple. You can go anywhere. I think you just have to report or something. Why? Are you fleeing the police?”

“Nothing definite yet.”

“Don’t tell me if you don’t want. But it would be interesting to hear. Nothing happens here. I was a great flop at Piacenza.”

“I’m awfully sorry.”

“Oh yes—I went very badly. I sung well too. I’m going to try it again at the Lyrico here.”

“I’d like to be there.”

“You’re awfully polite. You aren’t in a bad mess, are you?”

“I don’t know.”

“Don’t tell me if you don’t want. How do you happen to be away from the bloody front?”

“I think I’m through with it.”

“Good boy. I always knew you had sense. Can I help you any way?”

“You’re awfully busy.”

“Not a bit of it, my dear Henry. Not a bit of it. I’d be happy to do anything.”

“You’re about my size. Would you go out and buy me an outfit of civilian clothes? I’ve clothes but they’re all at Rome.”

“You did live there, didn’t you? It’s a filthy place. How did you ever live there?”

“I wanted to be an architect.”

“That’s no place for that. Don’t buy clothes. I’ll give you all the clothes you want. I’ll fit you out so you’ll be a great success. Go in that dressing room. There’s a closet. Take anything you want. My dear fellow, you don’t want to buy clothes.”

“I’d rather buy them, Sim.”

“My dear fellow, it’s easier for me to let you have them than go out and buy them. Have you got a passport? You won’t get far

without a passport."

"Yes. I've still got my passport."

"Then get dressed, my dear fellow, and off to old Helvetia."

"It's not that simple. I have to go up to Stresa first."

"Ideal, my dear fellow. You just row a boat across. If I wasn't trying to sing, I'd go with you. I'll go yet."

"You could take up yodelling."

"My dear fellow, I'll take up yodelling yet. I really can sing though. That's the strange part."

"I'll bet you can sing."

He lay back in bed smoking a cigarette.

"Don't bet too much. But I can sing though. It's damned funny, but I can. I like to sing. Listen." He roared into "Africans," his neck swelling, the veins standing out. "I can sing," he said. "Whether they like it or not." I looked out of the window. "I'll go down and let my cab go."

"Come back up, my dear fellow, and we'll have breakfast." He stepped out of bed, stood straight, took a deep breath and commenced doing bending exercises. I went downstairs and paid off the cab.

Chapter XXXIV

In civilian clothes I felt a masquerader. I had been in uniform a long time and I missed the feeling of being held by your clothes. The trousers felt very floppy. I had bought a ticket at Milan for Stresa. I had also bought a new hat. I could not wear Sim's hat but his clothes were fine. They smelled of tobacco and as I sat in the compartment and looked out the window the new hat felt very new and the clothes very old. I myself felt as sad as the wet Lombard country that was outside through the window. There were some aviators in the compartment who did not think much of me. They avoided looking at me and were very scornful of a civilian my age. I did not feel insulted. In the old days I would have insulted them and picked a fight. They got off at Gallarate and I was glad to be alone. I had the paper but I did not read it because I did not want to read about the war. I was going to forget the war. I had made a separate peace. I felt damned lonely and was glad when the train got to Stresa.

At the station I had expected to see the porters from the hotels but there was no one. The season had been over a long time and no one met the train. I got down from the train with my bag, it was Sirn's bag, and very light to carry, being empty except for two shirts, and stood under the roof of the station in the rain while the train went on. J found a man in the station and asked him if he knew what hotels were open. The Grand-Hotel & des Isles Borrornees was open and several small hotels that stayed open all the year. I started in the rain for the Isles Borrornees carrying my bag. I saw a carriage coming down the street and signalled to the

driver. It was better to arrive in a carriage. We drove up to the carriage entrance of the big hotel and the concierge came out with an umbrella and was very polite.

I took a good room. It was very big and light and looked out on the lake. The clouds were down over the lake but it would be beautiful with the sunlight. I was expecting my wife, I said. There was a big double bed, a *letto matrimaniale* with a satin coverlet. The hotel was very luxurious. I went down the long halls, down the wide stairs, through the rooms to the bar. I knew the barman and sat on a high stool and ate salted almonds and potato chips. The martini felt cool and clean.

"What are you doing here in *barghese?"* the barman asked after he had mixed a second martini.

"I am on leave. Convalescing-leave."

"There is no one here. I don't know why they keep the hotel open."

"Have you been fishing?"

"I've caught some beautiful pieces. Trolling this time of year you catch some beautiful pieces."

"Did you ever get the tobacco I sent?"

"Yes. Didn't you get my card?"

I laughed. I had not been able to get the tobacco. It was American pipe-tobacco that he wanted, but my relatives had stopped sending it or it was being held up. Anyway it never came.

"I'll get some somewhere," I said. "Tell me have you seen two English girls in the town? They came here day before yesterday."

"They are not at the hotel."

"They are nurses."

"I have seen two nurses. Wait a minute, I will find out where they are."

"One of them is my wife," I said. "I have come here to meet her."

"The other is my wife."

“I am not joking.”

“Pardon my stupid joke,” he said. “I did not understand.” He went away and was gone quite a little while. I ate olives, salted almonds and potato chips and looked at myself in civilian clothes in the mirror behind the bar. The bartender came back. “They are at the little hotel near the station,” he said.

“How about some sandwiches?”

“I’ll ring for some. You understand there is nothing here, now there are no people.”

“Isn’t there really anyone at all?”

“Yes. There are a few people.”

The sandwiches came and I ate three and drank a couple more martinis. I had never tasted anything so cool and clean. They made me feel civilized. I had had too much red wine, bread, cheese, bad coffee and grappa. I sat on the high stool before the pleasant mahogany, the brass and the mirrors and did not think at all. The barman asked me some question.

“Don’t talk about the war,” I said. The war was a long way away. Maybe there wasn’t any war. There was no war here. Then I realized it was over for me. But I did not have the feeling that it was really over. I had the feeling of a boy who thinks of what is happening at a certain hour at the schoolhouse from which he has played truant.

Catherine and Helen Ferguson were at supper when I came to their hotel. Standing in the hallway I saw them at table. Catherine’s face was away from me and I saw the line of her hair and her cheek and her lovely neck and shoulders. Ferguson was talking. She stopped when I came in.

“My God,” she said.

“Hello,” I said.

“Why it’s you!” Catherine said. Her face lighted up. She looked too happy to believe it. I kissed her. Catherine blushed and I sat down at the table.

“You’re a fine mess,” Ferguson said. “What are you doing here? Have you eaten?”

“No.” The girl who was serving the meal came in and I told her to bring a plate for me. Catherine looked at me all the time, her eyes happy.

“What are you doing in mufti?” Ferguson asked.

“I’m in the Cabinet.”

“You’re in some mess.”

“Cheer up, Fergy. Cheer up just a little.”

“I’m not cheered by seeing you. I know the mess you’ve gotten this girl into. You’re no cheerful sight to me.”

Catherine smiled at me and touched me with her foot under the table.

“No one got me in a mess, Fergy. I get in my own messes.”

“I can’t stand him,” Ferguson said. “He’s done nothing but ruin you with his sneaking Italian tricks. Americans are worse than Italians.”

“The Scotch are such a moral people,” Catherine said.

“I don’t mean that. I mean his Italian sneakiness.”

“Am I sneaky, Fergy?”

“You are. You’re worse than sneaky. You’re like a snake. A snake with an Italian uniform: with a cape around your neck.”

“I haven’t got an Italian uniform now.”

“That’s just another example of your sneakiness. You had a love affair all summer and got this girl with child and now I suppose you’ll sneak off.”

I smiled at Catherine and she smiled at me.

“We’ll both sneak off,” she said.

“You’re two of the same thing,” Ferguson said. “I’m ashamed of you, Catherine Barkley. You have no shame and no honor and you’re as sneaky as he is.”

“Don’t, Fergy,” Catherine said and patted her hand. “Don’t denounce me. You know we like each other.”

“Take your hand away,” Ferguson said. Her face was red. “If you had any shame it would be different. But you’re God knows how many months gone with child and you think it’s a joke and are all smiles because your seducer’s come back. You’ve no shame and no feelings.” She began to cry. Catherine went over and put her arm around her. As she stood comforting Ferguson, I could see no change in her figure.

“I don’t care,” Ferguson sobbed. “I think it’s dreadful.”

“There, there, Fergy,” Catherine comforted her. “I’ll be ashamed. Don’t cry, Fergy. Don’t cry, old Fergy.”

“I’m not crying,” Ferguson sobbed. “I’m not crying. Except for the awful thing you’ve gotten into.” She looked at me. “I hate you,” she said. “She can’t make me not hate you. You dirty sneaking American Italian.” Her eyes and nose were red with crying.

Catherine smiled at me.

“Don’t you smile at him with your arm around me.”

“You’re unreasonable, Fergy.”

“I know it,” Ferguson sobbed. “You mustn’t mind me, either of you. I’m so upset. I’m not reasonable. I know it. I want you both to be happy.”

“We’re happy,” Catherine said. “You’re a sweet Fergy.”

Ferguson cried again. “I don’t want you happy the way you are. Why don’t you get married? You haven’t got another wife have you?”

“No,” I said. Catherine laughed.

“It’s nothing to laugh about,” Ferguson said. “Plenty of them have other wives.”

“We’ll be married, Fergy,” Catherine said, “if it will please you.”

“Not to please me. You should want to be married.”

“We’ve been very busy.”

“Yes. I know. Busy making babies.” I thought she was going to cry again but she went into bitterness instead. “I suppose you’ll go off with him now tonight?”

"Yes," said Catherine. "If he wants me."

"What about me?"

"Are you afraid to stay here alone?"

"Yes, I am."

"Then I'll stay with you."

"No, go on with him. Go with him right away. I'm sick of seeing both of you."

"We'd better finish dinner."

"No. Go right away."

"Fergy, be reasonable."

"I say get out right away. Go away both of you."

"Let's go then," I said. I was sick of Fergy.

"You do want to go. You see you want to leave me even to eat dinner alone. I've always wanted to go to the Italian lakes and this is how it is. Oh, Oh," she sobbed, then looked at Catherine and choked.

"We'll stay till after dinner," Catherine said. "And I'll not leave you alone if you want me to stay. I won't leave you alone, Fergy."

"No. No. I want you to go. I want you to go." She wiped her eyes. "I'm so unreasonable. Please don't mind me."

The girl who served the meal had been upset by all the crying. Now as she brought in the next course she seemed relieved that things were better.

That night at the hotel, in our room with the long empty hall outside and our shoes outside the door, a thick carpet on the floor of the room, outside the windows the rain falling and in the room light and pleasant and cheerful, then the light out and it exciting with smooth sheets and the bed comfortable, feeling that we had come home, feeling no longer alone, waking in the night to find the other one there, and not gone away; all other things were unreal. We slept when we were tired and if we woke the other one woke too so one was not alone. Often a man wishes to be alone and 1a girl wishes to be alone too and if they love each other they are

jealous of that in each other, but I can truly say we never felt that. We could feel alone when we were together, alone against the others. It has only happened to me like that once. I have been alone while I was with many girls and that is the way that you can be most lonely. But we were never lonely and never afraid when we were together. I know that the night is not the same as the day: that all things are different, that the things of the night cannot be explained in the day, because they do not then exist, and the night can be a dreadful time for lonely people once their loneliness has started. But with Catherine there was almost no difference in the night except that it was an even better time. If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to bre1k them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that Will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry.

I remember waking in the morning. Catherine was asleep and the sunlight was coming in through the window. The rain had stopped and I stepped out of bed and across the floor to the window. Down below were the gardens, bare now but beautifully regular, the gravel paths, the trees, the stone wall by the lake and the lake in the sunlight with the mountains beyond. I stood at the window looking out and when I turned away I saw Catherine was awake and watching me.

"How are you, darling?" she said. "Isn't it a lovely day?"

"How do you feel?"

"I feel very well. We had a lovely night."

"Do you want breakfast?"

She wanted breakfast. So did I and we had it in bed, the November sunlight coming in the window, and the breakfast tray across my lap.

"Don't you want the paper? You always wanted the paper in the

hospital?"

"No," I said. "I don't want the paper now."

"Was it so bad you don't want even to read about it?"

"I don't want to read about it."

"I wish I had been with you so I would know about it too."

"I'll tell you about it if I ever get it straight in my head."

"But won't they arrest you if they catch you out of uniform?"

"They'll probably shoot me."

"Then we'll not stay here. We'll get out of the country."

"I'd thought something of that."

"We'll get out. Darling, you shouldn't take silly chances. Tell me how did you come from Mestre to Milan?"

"I came on the train. I was in uniform then."

"Weren't you in danger then?"

"Not much. I had an old order of movement. I fixed the dates on it in Mestre."

"Darling, you're liable to be arrested here any time. I won't have it. It's silly to do something like that. Where would we be if they took you off?"

"Let's not think about it. I'm tired of thinking about it."

"What would you do if they came to arrest you?"

"Shoot them."

"You see how silly you are, I won't let you go out of the hotel until we leave here."

"Where are we going to go?"

"Please don't be that way, darling. We'll go wherever you say. But please find some place to go right away."

"Switzerland is down the lake, we can go there."

"That will be lovely."

It was clouding over outside and the lake was darkening.

"I wish we did not always have to live like criminals," I said.

"Darling, don't be that way. You haven't lived like a criminal very long. And we never live like criminals. We're going to have a

fine time."

"I feel like a criminal. I've deserted from the army."

"Darling, *please* be sensible. It's not deserting from the army. It's only the Italian army."

I laughed. "You're a fine girl. Let's get back into bed. I feel fine in bed."

A little while later Catherine said, "You don't feel like a criminal do you?"

"No," I said. "Not when I'm with you."

"You're such a silly boy," she said. "But I'll look after you. Isn't it splendid, darling, that I don't have any morning-sickness?"

"It's grand."

"You don't appreciate what a fine wife you have. But I don't care. I'll get you some place where they can't arrest you and then well have a lovely time."

"Let's go there right away."

"We will, darling. I'll go anyplace any time you wish."

"Let's not think about anything."

"All right."

Chapter XXXV

Catherine went along the lake to the little hotel to see Ferguson and I sat in the bar and read the papers. There were comfortable leather chairs in the bar and I sat in one of them and read until the barman came in. The army had not stood at the Tagliamento. They were falling back to the Piave. I remembered the Piave. The railroad crossed it near San Dona going up to the front. It was deep and slow there and quite narrow. Down below there were mosquito marshes and canals. There were some lovely villas. Once, before the war, going up to Cortina D'Ampezzo I had gone along it for several hours in the hills. Up there it looked like a trout stream, flowing swiftly with shallow stretches and pools under the shadow of the rocks. The road turned off from it at Cadore. I wondered how the army that was up there would come down. The barman came in.

"Count Greffi was asking for you," he said.

"Who?"

"Count Greffi. You remember the old man who was here when you were here before."

"Is he here?"

"Yes, he's here with his niece. I told him you were here. He wants you to play billiards."

"Where is he?"

"He's taking a walk."

"How is he?"

"He's younger than ever. He drank three champagne cocktails last night before dinner."

"How's his billiard game?"

“Good. He beat me. When I told him you were here he was very pleased. There’s nobody here for him to play with.”

Count Greffi was ninety-four years old. He had been a contemporary of Metternich and was an old man with white hair and mustache and beautiful manners. He had been in the diplomatic service of both Austria and Italy and his birthday parties were the great social event of Milan. He was living to be one hundred years old and played a smoothly fluent game of billiards that contrasted with his own ninety-four-year-old brittleness. I had met him when I had been at Stresa once before out of season and while we played billiards we drank champagne. I thought it was a splendid custom and he gave me fifteen points in a hundred and beat me.

“Why didn’t you tell me he was here?”

“I forgot it.”

“Who else is here?”

“No one you know. There are only six people altogether.”

“What are you doing now?”

“Nothing.”

“Come on out fishing.”

“I could come for an hour.”

“Come on. Bring the trolling line.”

The barman put on a coat and we went out. We went down and got a boat and I rowed while the barman sat in the stern and let out the line with a spinner and a heavy sinker on the end to troll for lake trout. We rowed along the shore, the barman holding the line in his hand and giving it occasional jerks forward. Stresa looked very deserted from the lake. There were the long rows of bare trees, the big hotels and the closed villas. I rowed across to Isola Bella and went close to the walls, where the water deepened sharply, and you saw the rock wall slanting down in the clear water, and then up and along to the fisherman’s island. The sun was under a cloud and the water was dark and smooth and very cold. We did not have a strike

though we saw some circles on the water from rising fish.

I rowed up opposite the fisherman's island where there were boats drawn up and men were mending nets.

"Should we get a drink?"

"All right."

I brought the boat up to the stone pier and the barman pulled in the line, coiling it on the bottom of the boat and hooking the spinner on the edge of the gunwale. I stepped out and tied the boat. We went into a little cafe, sat at a bare wooden table and ordered vermouth.

"Are you tired from rowing?"

"I'll row back," he said.

"I like to row."

"Maybe if you hold the line it will change the luck."

"All right."

"Tell me how goes the war."

"Rotten."

"I don't have to go. I'm too old, like Count Greffi."

"Maybe you'll have to go yet."

"Next year they'll call my class. But I won't go."

"What will you do?"

"Get out of the country. I wouldn't go to war. I was at the war once in Abyssinia. Nix. Why do you go?"

"I don't know. I was a fool."

"Have another vermouth?"

"All right."

The barman rowed back. We trolled up the lake beyond Stresa and then down not far from shore. I held the taut line and felt the faint pulsing of the spinner revolving while I looked at the dark November water of the lake and the deserted shore. The barman rowed with long strokes and on the forward thrust of the boat the line throbbed. Once I had a strike: the line hardened suddenly and jerked back. I pulled and felt the live weight of the trout and then

the line throbbed again. I had missed him.

"Did he feel big?"

"Pretty big."

"Once when I was out trolling alone I had the line in my teeth and one struck and nearly took my mouth out."

"The best way is to have it over your leg," I said. "Then you feel it and don't lose your teeth."

I put my hand in the water. It was very cold. We were almost opposite the hotel now.

"I have to go in," the barman said, "to be there for eleven o'clock. *L'heure du cocktail."*

"All right."

I pulled in the line and wrapped it on a stick notched at each end. The barman put the boat in a little slip in the stone wall and locked it with a chain and padlock.

"Any time you want it," he said, "I'll give you the key."

"Thanks."

We went up to the hotel and into the bar. I did not want another drink so early in the morning so I went up to our room. The maid had just finished doing the room and Catherine was not back yet. I lay down on the bed and tried to keep from thinking.

When Catherine came back it was all right again. Ferguson was downstairs, she said. She was coming to lunch.

"I knew you wouldn't mind," Catherine said.

"No," I said.

"What's the matter, darling?"

"I don't know."

"I know. You haven't anything to do. All you have is me and I go away."

"That's true."

"I'm sorry, darling. I know it must be a dreadful feeling to have nothing at all suddenly."

"My life used to be full of everything," I said. "Now if you aren't

with me I haven't a thing in the world."

"But I'll be with you. I was only gone for two hours. Isn't there anything you can do?"

"I went fishing with the barman."

"Wasn't it fun?"

"Yes."

"Don't think about me when I'm not here."

"That's the way I worked it at the front. But there was something to do then."

"Othello with his occupation gone," she teased.

"Othello was a nigger," I said. "Besides, I'm not jealous. I'm just so in love with you that there isn't anything else."

"Will you be a good boy and be nice to Ferguson?"

"I'm always nice to Ferguson unless she curses me."

"Be nice to her. Think how much we have and she hasn't anything."

"I don't think she wants what we have."

"You don't know much, darling, for such a wise boy."

"I'll be nice to her."

"I know you will. You're so sweet."

"She won't stay afterward, will she?"

"No. I'll get rid of her."

"And then we'll come up here.

"Of course. What do you think I want to do?"

We went downstairs to have lunch with Ferguson. She was very impressed by the hotel and the splendor of the dining-room. We had a good lunch with a couple of bottles of white capri. Count Greffi came into the dining-room and bowed to us. His niece, who looked a little like my grandmother, was with him. I told Catherine and Ferguson about him and Ferguson was very impressed. The hotel was very big and grand and empty but the food was good, the wine was very pleasant and finally the wine made us all feel very well. Catherine had no need to feel any better. She was very happy.

Ferguson became quite cheerful. I felt very well myself. After lunch Ferguson went back to her hotel. She was going to lie down for a while after lunch she said.

Along late in the afternoon someone knocked on our door.

"Who is it?"

"The Count Greffi wishes to know if you will play billiards with him. "

I looked at my watch; I had taken it off and it was under the pillow.

"Do you have to go, darling?" Catherine whispered.

"I think I'd better." The watch was a quarter-past four o'clock. Out loud I said, "Tell the Count Greffi I will be in the billiard room at five o'clock."

At a quarter to five I kissed Catherine goodbye and went into the bathroom to dress. Knotting my tie and looking in the glass I looked strange to myself in the civilian clothes. I must remember to buy some more shirts and socks.

"Will you be away a long time?" Catherine asked. She looked lovely in the bed. "Would you hand me the brush?"

I watched her brushing her hair, holding her head so the weight of her hair all came on one side. It was dark outside and the light over the head of the bed shone on her hair and on her neck and shoulders. I went over and kissed her and held her hand with the brush and her head sunk back on the pillow. I kissed her neck and shoulders. I felt faint with loving her so much.

"I don't want to go away."

"I don't want you to go away."

"I won't go then."

"Yes. Go. It's only for a little while and then you'll come back."

"We'll have dinner up here."

"Hurry and come back."

I found the Count Greffi in the billiard-room. He was practicing strokes, looking very fragile under the light that came down above

the billiard table. On a card table a little way beyond the light was a silver icing-bucket with the necks and corks of two champagne bottles showing above the ice. The Count Greffi straightened up when I came toward the table and walked toward me. He put out his hand, “It is such a great pleasure that you are here. You were very kind to come to play with me.”

“It was very nice of you to ask me.”

“Are you quite well? They told me you were wounded on the Isonzo. I hope you are well again.”

“I’m very well. Have you been well?”

“Oh, I am always well. But I am getting old. I detect signs of age now.”

“I can’t believe it.”

‘’Yes. Do you want to know one? It is easier for me to talk Italian. I discipline myself but I find when I am tired that it is so much easier to talk Italian. So I know I must be getting old.”

“We could talk Italian. I am a little tired, too.”

“Oh, but when you are tired it will be easier for you to talk English.”

“American.”

“Yes. American. You will please talk American. It is a delightful language.”

“I hardly ever see Americans.”

“You must miss them. One misses one’s countrymen and especially one’s countrywomen. I know that experience. Should we play or are you too tired?”

“I’m not really tired. I said that for a joke. What handicap will you give me?”

“Have you been playing very much?”

“None at all.”

“You play very well. Ten points in a hundred?”

“You flatter me.”

“Fifteen?”

“That would be fine but you will beat me.”

“Should we play for a stake? You always wished to play for a stake.”

“I think we’d better.”

“All right. I will give you eighteen points and we will play for a franc a point.”

He played a lovely game of billiards and with the handicap I was only four ahead at fifty. Count Greffi pushed a button on the wall to ring for the barman.

“Open one bottle please,” he said. Then to me, “We will take a little stimulant.” The wine was icy cold and very dry and good.

“Should we talk Italian? Would you mind very much? It is my weakness now.”

We went on playing, sipping the wine between shots, speaking in Italian, but talking little, concentrated on the game. Count Greffi made his one hundredth point and with the handicap I was only at ninety-four. He smiled and patted me on the shoulder.

“Now we will drink the other bottle and you will tell me about the war.” He waited for me to sit down.

“About anything else,” I said.

“You don’t want to talk about it? Good. What have you been reading?”

“Nothing,” I said. “I’m afraid I am very dull.”

“No. But you should read.”

“What is there written in wartime?”

“There is *Le Feu* by a Frenchman, Barbusse. There is *Mr. Britling Sees Through It.*”

“No, he doesn’t.”

“What?”

“He doesn’t see through it. Those books were at the hospital.”

“Then you have been reading?”

“Yes, but nothing any good.”

“I thought *Mr. Britling* a very good study of the English

middleclass soul."

"I don't know about the soul."

"Poor boy. We none of us know about the soul. Are you *Croyant?"*

"At night."

Count Greffi smiled and turned the glass with his fingers. "I had expected to become more devout as I grow older but somehow I haven't," he said. "It is a great pity."

"Would you like to live after death?" I asked and instantly felt a fool to mention death. But he did not mind the word.

"It would depend on the life. This life is very pleasant. I would like to live forever," he smiled. "I very nearly have."

We were sitting in the deep leather chairs, the champagne in the ice-bucket and our glasses on the table between us.

"If you ever live to be as old as I am you will find many things strange."

"You never seem old."

"It is the body that is old. Sometimes I am afraid I will break off a finger as one breaks a stick of chalk. And the spirit is no older and not much wiser."

"You are wise."

"No, that is the great fallacy; the wisdom of old men. They do not grow wise. They grow careful."

"Perhaps that is wisdom."

"It is a very unattractive wisdom. What do you value most?"

"Someone I love."

"With me it is the same. That is not wisdom. Do you value life?"

"Yes."

"So do I. Because it is all I have. And to give birthday parties," he laughed. "You are probably wiser than I am. You do not give birthday parties."

We both drank the wine.

"What do you think of the war really?" I asked.

“I think it is stupid.”

“Who will win it?”

“Italy.”

“Why?”

“They are a younger nation.”

“Do younger nations always win wars?”

“They are apt to for a time.”

“Then what happens?”

“They become older nations.”

“You said you were not wise.”

“Dear boy, that is not wisdom. That is cynicism.”

“It sounds very wise to me.”

“It’s not particularly. I could quote you the examples on the other side. But it is not bad. Have we finished the champagne?”

“Almost.”

“Should we drink some more? Then I must dress.”

“Perhaps we’d better not now.”

“You are sure you don’t want more?”

“Yes.” He stood up.

“I hope you will be very fortunate and very happy and very, very healthy.”

“Thank you. And I hope you will live forever.”

“Thank you. I have. And if you ever become devout pray for me if I am dead. I am asking several of my friends to do that. I had expected to become devout myself but it has not come.” I thought he smiled sadly but I could not tell. He was so old and his face was very wrinkled, so that a smile used so many lines that all gradations were lost.

“I might become very devout,” I said. “Anyway, I will pray for you.”

“I had always expected to become devout. All my family died very devout. But somehow it does not come.”

“It’s too early.”

“Maybe it is too late. Perhaps I have outlived my religious feeling.”

“My own comes only at night.”

“Then too you are in love. Do not forget that is a religious feeling.”

“You believe so?”

“Of course.” He took a step toward the table. “You were very kind to play.”

“It was a great pleasure.”

“We will walk up stairs together.”

Chapter XXXVI

That night there was a storm and I woke to hear the rain lashing the windowpanes. It was coming in the open window. Someone had knocked on the door. I went to the door very softly, not to disturb Catherine, and opened it. The barman stood there. He wore his overcoat and carried his wet hat.

"Can I speak to you, Tenente?"

"What's the matter?"

"It's a very serious matter."

I looked around. The room was dark. I saw the water on the floor from the window. "Come in," I said. I took him by the arm into the bathroom; locked the door and put on the light. I sat down on the edge of the bathtub.

"What's the matter, Emilio? Are you in trouble?"

"No. You are, Tenente."

"Yes?"

"They are going to arrest you in the morning."

"Yes?"

"I came to tell you. I was out in the town and I heard them talking in a cafe."

"I see."

He stood there, his coat wet, holding his wet hat and said nothing.

"Why are they going to arrest me?"

"For something about the war."

"Do you know what?"

"No. But I know that they know you were here before as an

officer and now you are here out of uniform. After this retreat they arrest everybody."

I thought a minute.

"What time do they come to arrest me?"

"In the morning. I don't know the time."

"What do you say to do?"

He put his hat in the washbowl. It was very wet and had been dripping on the floor.

"If you have nothing to fear an arrest is nothing. But it is always bad to be arrested—especially now."

"I don't want to be arrested."

"Then go to Switzerland."

"How?"

"In my boat."

"There is a storm," I said.

"The storm is over. It is rough but you will be all right."

"When should we go?"

"Right away. They might come to arrest you early in the morning."

"What about our bags?"

"Get them packed. Get your lady dressed. I will take care of them."

"Where will you be?"

"I will wait here. I don't want anyone to see me outside in the hall."

I opened the door, closed it, and went into the bedroom. Catherine was awake.

"What is it, darling?"

"It's all right, Cat," I said. "Would you like to get dressed right away and go in a boat to Switzerland?"

"Would you?"

"No," I said. "I'd like to go back to bed."

"What is it about?"

“The barman says they are going to arrest me in the morning.”

“Is the barman crazy?”

“No.”

“Then please hurry, darling, and get dressed so we can start.” She sat up on the side of the bed. She was still sleepy. “Is that the barman in the bathroom?”

“Yes.”

“Then I won’t wash. Please look the other way, darling, and I’ll be dressed in just a minute.”

I saw her white back as she took off her nightgown and then I looked away because she wanted me to. She was beginning to be a little big with the child and she did not want me to see her. I dressed hearing the rain on the windows. I did not have much to put in my bag.

“There’s plenty of room in my bag, Cat, if you need any.”

“I’m almost packed,” she said. “Darling, I’m awfully stupid, but why is the barman in the bathroom?”

“Sh—he’s waiting to take our bags down.”

“He’s awfully nice.”

“He’s an old friend,” I said. “I nearly sent him some pipe tobacco once.”

I looked out the open window at the dark night. I could not see the lake, only the dark and the rain but the wind was quieter.

“I’m ready, darling,” Catherine said.

“All right.” I went to the bathroom door. “Here are the bags, Emilio,” I said. The barman took the two bags.

“You’re very good to help us,” Catherine said.

“That’s nothing, lady,” the barman said. “I’m glad to help you just so I don’t get in trouble myself. Listen,” he said to me. “I’ll take these out the servants’ stairs and to the boat. You just go out as though you were going for a walk.”

“It’s a lovely night for a walk,” Catherine said.

“It’s a bad night all right.”

“I’m glad I’ve an umbrella,” Catherine said.

We walked down the hall and down the wide thickly carpeted stairs. At the foot of the stairs by the door the porter sat behind his desk.

He looked surprised at seeing us.

“You’re not going out, sir?” he said.

“Yes,” I said. “We’re going to see the storm along the lake.”

“Haven’t you got an umbrella, sir?”

“No,” I said. “This coat sheds water.”

He looked at it doubtfully. “I’ll get you an umbrella, sir,” he said. He went away and came back with a big umbrella. “It is a little big, sir,” he said. I gave him a ten-lira note. “Oh you are too good, sir. Thank you very much,” he said. He held the door open and we went out into the rain. He smiled at Catherine and she smiled at him. “Don’t stay out in the storm,” he said. “You will get wet, sir and lady.” He was only the second porter, and his English was still literally translated.

“We’ll be back,” I said. We walked down the path under the giant umbrella and out through the dark wet gardens to the road and across the road to the trellised pathway along the lake. The wind was blowing offshore now. It was a cold, wet November wind and I knew it was snowing in the mountains. We came along past the chained boats in the slips along the quay to where the barman’s boat should be. The water was dark against the stone. The barman stepped out from beside the row of trees.

“The bags are in the boat,” he said.

“I want to pay you for the boat,” I said.

“How much money have you?”

“Not so much.”

“You send me the money later. That will be all right.”

“How much?”

“What you want.”

“Tell me how much.”

“If you get through send me five hundred francs. You won’t mind that if you get through.”

“All right.”

“Here are sandwiches.” He handed me a package. “Everything there was in the bar. It’s all here. This is a bottle of brandy and a bottle of wine.” I put them in my bag. “Let me pay you for those.”

“All right, give me fifty lire.”

I gave it to him. “The brandy is good,” he said. “You don’t need to be afraid to give it to your lady. She better get in the boat.” He held the boat, it rising and falling against the stone wall and I helped Catherine in. She sat in the stern and pulled her cape around her.

“You know where to go?”

“Up the lake.”

“You know how far?”

“Past Luino.”

“Past Luino, Cannero, Cannobio, Tranzano. You aren’t in Switzerland until you come to Brissago. You have to pass Monte Tamara.”

“What time is it?” Catherine asked.

“It’s only eleven o’clock,” I said.

“If you row all the time you ought to be there by seven o’clock in the morning.”

“Is it that far?”

“It’s thirty-five kilometres.”

“How should we go? In this rain we need a compass.”

“No. Row to Isola Bella. Then on the other side of Isola Madre go with the wind. The wind will take you to Pallanza. You will see the lights. Then go up the shore.”

“Maybe the wind will change.”

“No,” he said. “This wind will blow like this for three days. It comes straight down from the Mattarone. There is a can to bail with.”

“Let me pay you something for the boat now.”

“No, I’d rather take a chance. If you get through you pay me all you can.”

“All right.”

“I don’t think you’ll get drowned.”

“That’s good.”

“Go with the wind up the lake.”

“All right.” I stepped in the boat.

“Did you leave the money for the hotel?”

“Yes. In an envelope in the room.”

“All right. Good luck, Tenente.”

“Good luck. We thank you many times.”

“You won’t thank me if you get drowned.”

“What does he say?” Catherine asked.

“He says good luck.”

“Good luck,” Catherine said. “Thank you very much.”

“Are you ready?”

“Yes.”

He bent down and shoved us off. I dug at the water with the oars, then waved one hand. The barman waved back deprecatingly. I saw the lights of the hotel and rowed out, rowing straight out until they were out of sight. There was quite a sea running but we were going with the wind.

Chapter XXXVII

I rowed in the dark keeping the wind in my face. The rain had stopped and only came occasionally in gusts. It was very dark, and the wind was cold. I could see Catherine in the stern but I could not see the water where the blades of the oars dipped. The oars were long and there were no leathers to keep them from slipping out. I pulled, raised, leaned forward, found the water, dipped and pulled, rowing as easily as I could. I did not feather the oars because the wind was with us. I knew my hands would blister and I wanted to delay it as long as I could. The boat was light and rowed easily. I pulled it along in the dark water. I could not see, and hoped we would soon come opposite Pallanza.

We never saw Pallanza. The wind was blowing up the lake and we passed the point that hides Pallanza in the dark and never saw the lights. When we finally saw some lights much further up the lake and close to the shore it was Intra. But for a long time we did not see any lights, nor did we see the shore but rowed steadily in the dark riding with the waves. Sometimes I missed the water with the oars in the dark as a wave lifted the boat. It was quite rough; but I kept on rowing, until suddenly we were close ashore against a point of rock that rose beside us; the waves striking against it, rushing high up, then falling back. I pulled hard on the right oar and backed water with the other and we went out into the lake again; the point was out of sight and we were going on up the lake.

"We're across the lake," I said to Catherine.

"Weren't we going to see Pallanza?"

"We've missed it."

“How are you, darling?”

“I’m fine.”

“I could take the oars awhile.”

“No, I’m fine.”

“Poor Ferguson,” Catherine said. “In the morning she’ll come to the hotel and find we’re gone.”

“I’m not worrying so much about that,” I said, “as about getting into the Swiss part of the lake before it’s daylight and the custom guards see us.”

“Is it a long way?”

“It’s some thirty kilometres from here.”

I rowed all night. Finally my hands were so sore I could hardly close them over the oars. We were nearly smashed up on the shore several times. I kept fairly close to the shore because I was afraid of getting lost on the lake and losing time. Sometimes we were so close we could see a row of trees and the road along the shore with the mountains behind. The rain stopped and the wind drove the clouds so that the moon shone through and looking back I could see the long dark point of Castagnola and the lake with white-caps and beyond, the moon on the high snow mountains. Then the clouds came over the moon again and the mountains and the lake were gone, but it was much lighter than it had been before and we could see the shore. I could see it too clearly and pulled out where they would not see the boat if there were custom guards along the Pallanza road. When the moon came out again we could see white villas on the shore on the slopes of the mountain and the white road where it showed through the trees. All the time I was rowing.

The lake widened and across it on the shore at the foot of the mountains on the other side we saw a few lights that should be Luino. I saw a wedge-like gap between the mountains on the other shore and I thought that must be Luino. If it was we were making good time. I pulled in the oars and lay back on the seat. I was very, very tired of rowing. My arms and shoulders and back ached and

my hands were sore.

"I could hold the umbrella," Catherine said. "We could sail with that with the wind."

"Can you steer?"

"I think so."

"You take this oar and hold it under your arm close to the side of the boat and steer and I'll hold the umbrella." I went back to the stern and showed her how to hold the oar. I took the big umbrella the porter had given me and sat facing the bow and opened it. It opened with a clap. I held it on both sides, sitting astride the handle hooked over the seat. The wind was full in it and I felt the boat suck forward while I held as hard as I could to the two edges. It pulled hard. The boat was moving fast.

"We're going beautifully," Catherine said. All I could see was umbrella ribs. The umbrella strained and pulled and I felt us driving along with it. I braced my feet and held back on it, then suddenly, it buckled; I felt a rib snap on my forehead, I tried to grab the top that was bending with the wind and the whole thing buckled and went inside out and I was astride the handle of an inside out, ripped umbrella, where I had been holding a wind-filled pulling sail. I unhooked the handle from the seat, laid the umbrella in the bow and went back to Catherine for the oar. She was laughing. She took my hand and kept on laughing.

"What's the matter?" I took the oar.

"You looked so funny holding that thing."

"I suppose so."

"Don't be cross, darling. It was awfully funny. You looked about twenty feet broad and very affectionate holding the umbrella by the edges—" she choked.

"I'll row."

"Take a rest and a drink. It's a grand night and we've come a long way."

"I have to keep the boat out of the trough of the waves."

"I'll get you a drink. Then rest a little while, darling."

I held the oars up and we sailed with them. Catherine was opening the bag. She handed me the brandy bottle. I pulled the cork with my pocket-knife and took a long drink. It was smooth and hot and the heat went all through me and I felt warmed and cheerful. "It's lovely brandy," I said. The moon was under again but I could see the shore. There seemed to be another point going out a long way ahead into the lake.

"Are you warm enough, Cat?"

"I'm splendid. I'm a little stiff."

"Bail out that water and you can put your feet down."

Then I rowed and listened to the oarlocks and the dip and scrape of the bailing tin under the stern seat.

"Would you give me the bailer?" I said. "I want a drink."

"It's awful dirty."

"That's all right. I'll rinse it."

I heard Catherine rinsing it over the side. Then she handed it to me dipped full of water. I was thirsty after the brandy and the water was icy cold, so cold it made my teeth ache. I looked toward the shore. We were closer to the long point. There were lights in the bay ahead.

"Thanks," I said and handed back the tin pail.

"You're ever so welcome," Catherine said. "There's much more if you want it."

"Don't you want to eat something?"

"No. I'll be hungry in a little while. We'll save it till then."

"All right."

What looked like a point ahead was a long high headland. went further out in the lake to pass it. The lake was much narrower now. The moon was out again and the *guardia di finanza* could have seen our boat black on the water if they had been watching.

"How are you, Cat?" I asked.

"I'm all right. Where are we?"

"I don't think we have more than about eight miles more."

"That's a long way to row, you poor sweet. Aren't you dead?"

"No. I'm all right. My hands are sore is all."

We went on up the lake. There was a break in the mountains on the right bank, a flattening-out with a low shore line that I thought must be Cannobio. I stayed a long way out because it was from now on that we ran the most danger of meeting *guardia.* There was a high dome-capped mountain on the other shore a way ahead. I was tired. It was no great distance to row but when you were out of condition it had been a long way. I knew I had to pass that mountain and go up the lake at least five miles further before we would be in Swiss water. The moon was almost down now but before it went down the sky clouded over again and it was very dark. I stayed well out in the lake, rowing awhile, then resting and holding the oars so that the wind struck the blades.

"Let me row awhile," Catherine said.

"I don't think you ought to."

"Nonsense. It would be good for me. It would keep me from being too stiff."

"I don't think you should, Cat."

"Nonsense. Rowing in moderation is very good for the pregnant lady."

"All right, you row a little moderately. I'll go back, then you come up. Hold on to both gunwales when you come up."

I sat in the stern with my coat on and the collar turned up and watched Catherine row. She rowed very well but the oars were too long and bothered her. I opened the bag and ate a couple of sandwiches and took a drink of the brandy. It made everything much better and I took another drink.

"Tell me when you're tired," I said. Then a little later, "Watch out the oar doesn't pop you in the tummy."

"If it did"—Catherine said between strokes—"life might be much simpler."

I took another drink of the brandy.

"How are you going?"

"All right."

"Tell me when you want to stop."

"All right."

I took another drink of the brandy, then took hold of the two gunwales of the boat and moved forward.

"No. I'm going beautifully."

"Go on back to the stern. I've had a grand rest."

For a while, with the brandy, I rowed easily and steadily. Then I began to catch crabs and soon I was just chopping along again with a thin brown taste of bile from having rowed too hard after the brandy.

"Give me a drink of water, will you?" I said.

"That's easy," Catherine said.

Before daylight it started to drizzle. The wind was down or we were protected by mountains that bounded the curve the lake had made. When I knew daylight was coming I settled down and rowed hard. I did not know where we were and I wanted to get into the Swiss part of the lake. When it was beginning to be daylight we were quite close to the shore. I could see the rocky shore and the trees.

"What's that?" Catherine said. I rested on the oars and listened. It was a motor boat chugging out on the lake. I pulled close up to the shore and lay quiet. The chugging came closer; then we saw the motor boat in the rain a little astern of us. There were four *guardia di finanza* in the stern, their *alpini* hats pulled down, their cape collars turned up and their carbines slung across their backs. They all looked sleepy so early in the morning. I could see the yellow on their hats and the yellow marks on their cape collars. The motor boat chugged on and out of sight in the rain.

I pulled out into the lake. If we were that close to the border I did not want to be hailed by a sentry along the road. I stayed out

where I could just see the shore and rowed on for three quarters of an hour in the rain. We heard a motor boat once more but I kept quiet until the noise of the engine went away across the lake.

"I think we're in Switzerland, Cat," I said.

"Really?"

"There's no way to know until we see Swiss troops."

"Or the Swiss navy."

"The Swiss navy's no joke for us. That last motor boat we heard was probably the Swiss navy."

"If we're in Switzerland let's have a big breakfast. They have wonderful rolls and butter and jam in Switzerland."

It was clear daylight now and a fine rain was falling. The wind was still blowing outside up the lake and we could see the tops of the white-caps going away from us and up the lake. I was sure we were in Switzerland now. There were many houses back in the trees from the shore and up the shore a way was a village with stone houses, some villas on the hills and a church. I had been looking at the road that skirted the shore for guards but did not see any. The road came quite close to the lake now and I saw a soldier coming out of a cafe on the road. He wore a gray-green uniform and a helmet like the Germans. He had a healthy-looking face and a little toothbrush mustache. He looked at us.

"Wave to him," I said to Catherine. She waved and the soldier smiled embarrassedly and gave a wave of his hand. I eased up rowing. We were passing the waterfront of the village.

"We must be well inside the border," I said.

"We want to be sure, darling. We don't want them to turn us back at the frontier."

"The frontier is a long way back. I think this is the customs town. I'm pretty sure it's Brissago."

"Won't there be Italians there? There are always both sides at a customs town."

"Not in wartime. I don't think they let the Italians cross the

frontier."

It was a nice-looking little town. There were many fishing boats along the quay and nets were spread on racks. There was a fine November rain falling but it looked cheerful and clean even with the rain.

"Should we land then and have breakfast?"

"All right."

I pulled hard on the left oar and came in close, then straightened out when we were close to the quay and brought the boat alongside. I pulled in the oars, took hold of an iron ring, stepped up on the wet stone and was in Switzerland. I tied the boat and held my hand down to Catherine.

"Come on up, Cat. It's a grand feeling."

"What about the bags?"

"Leave them in the boat."

Catherine stepped up and we were in Switzerland together.

"What a lovely country," she said.

"Isn't it grand?"

"Let's go and have breakfast!"

"Isn't it a grand country? I love the way it feels under my shoes."

"I'm so stiff I can't feel it very well. But it feels like a splendid country. Darling, do you realize we're here and out of that bloody place?"

"I do. I really do. I've never realized anything before."

"Look at the houses. Isn't this a fine square? There's a place we can get breakfast."

"Isn't the rain fine? They never had rain like this in Italy. It's cheerful rain."

"And we're here, darling! Do you realize we're here?"

We went inside the café and sat down at a clean wooden table. We were cockeyed excited. A splendid clean-looking woman with an apron came and asked us what we wanted.

“Rolls and jam and coffee,” Catherine said.

“I’m sorry, we haven’t any rolls in wartime.”

“Bread then.”

“I can make you some toast.”

“All right.”

“I want some eggs fried too.”

“How many eggs for the gentleman?”

“Three.”

“Take four, darling.”

“Four eggs.”

The woman went away. I kissed Catherine and held her hand very tight. We looked at each other and at the café .

“Darling, darling, isn’t it lovely?”

“It’s grand,” I said.

“I don’t mind there not being rolls,” Catherine said. “I thought about them all night. But I don’t mind it. I don’t mind it at all.”

“I suppose pretty soon they will arrest us.”

“Never mind, darling. We’ll have breakfast first. You won’t mind being arrested after breakfast. And then there’s nothing they can do to us. We’re British and American citizens in good standing.”

“You have a passport, haven’t you?”

“Of course. Oh let’s not talk about it. Let’s be happy.”

“I couldn’t be any happier,” I said. A fat gray cat with a tail that lifted like a plume crossed the floor to our table and curved against my leg to purr each time she rubbed. I reached down and stroked her. Catherine smiled at me very happily. “Here comes the coffee,” she said.

They arrested us after breakfast. We took a little walk through the village then went down to the quay to get our bags. A soldier was standing guard over the boat.

“Is this your boat?”

“Yes.”

“Where do you come from?”

“Up the lake.”

“Then I have to ask you to come with me.”

“How about the bags?”

“You can carry the bags.”

I carried the bags and Catherine walked beside me and the soldier walked along behind us to the old custom house. In the custom house a lieutenant, very thin and military, questioned us.

“What nationality are you?”

“American and British.”

“Let me see your passports.”

I gave him mine and Catherine got hers out of her handbag.

He examined them for a long time.

“Why do you enter Switzerland this way in a boat?”

“I am a sportsman,” I said. “Rowing is my great sport. I always row when I get a chance.”

“Why do you come here?”

“For the winter sport. We are tourists and we want to do the winter sport.”

“This is no place for winter sport.”

“We know it. We want to go where they have the winter sport.”

“What have you been doing in Italy?”

“I have been studying architecture. My cousin has been studying art.”

“Why do you leave there?”

“We want to do the winter sport. With the war going on you cannot study architecture.”

“You will please stay where you are,” the lieutenant said. He went back into the building with our passports.

“You’re splendid, darling,” Catherine said. “Keep on the same track. You want to do the winter sport.”

“Do you know anything about art?”

“Rubens,” said Catherine.

“Large and fat,” I said.

“Titian,” Catherine said.

“Titian-haired,” I said. “How about Mantegna?”

“Don’t ask hard ones,” Catherine said. “I know him though—very bitter.”

“Very bitter,” I said. “Lots of nail holes.”

“You see I’ll make you a fine wife,” Catherine said. “I’ll be able to talk art with your customers.”

“Here he comes,” I said. The thin lieutenant came down the length of the custom house, holding our passports.

“I will have to send you into Locarno,” he said. “You can get a carriage and a soldier will go in with you.”

“All right,” I said. “What about the boat?”

“The boat is confiscated. What have you in those bags?”

He went all through the two bags and held up the quarter bottle of brandy. “Would you join me in a drink?” I asked.

“No thank you.” He straightened up. “How much money have you?”

“Twenty-five hundred lire.”

He was favorably impressed. “How much has your cousin?”

Catherine had a little over twelve hundred lire. The lieutenant was pleased. His attitude toward us became less haughty.

“If you are going for winter sports,” he said, “Wengen is the place. My father has a very fine hotel at Wengen. It is open all the time.”

“That’s splendid,” I said. “Could you give me the name?”

“I will write it on a card.” He handed me the card very politely.

“The soldier will take you into Locarno. He will keep your passports. I regret this but it is necessary. I have good hopes they will give you a visa or a police permit at Locarno.”

He handed the two passports to the soldier and carrying the bags we started into the village to order a carriage. “Hi,” the lieutenant called to the soldier. He said something in a German dialect to him. The soldier slung his rifle on his back and picked up

the bags.

"It's a great country," I said to Catherine.

"It's so practical."

"Thank you very much," I said to the lieutenant. He waved his hand.

"Service!" he said. We followed our guard into the village.

We drove to Locarno in a carriage with the soldier sitting on the front seat with the driver. At Locarno we did not have a bad time. They questioned us but they were polite because we had passports and money. I do not think they believed a word of the story and I thought it was silly but it was like a law-court. You did not want something reasonable, you wanted something technical and then stuck to it without explanations. But we had passports and we would spend the money. So they gave us provisional visas.

At any time this visa might be withdrawn. We were to report to the police wherever we went.

Could we go wherever we wanted? Yes. Where did we want to go?

"Where do you want to go, Cat?"

"Montreux."

"It is a very nice place," the official said. "I think you will like that place."

"Here at Locarno is a very nice place," another official said. "I am sure you would like it here very much at Locarno. Locarno is a very attractive place."

"We would like some place where there is winter sport."

"There is no winter sport at Montreux."

"I beg your pardon," the other official said. "I come from Montreux. There is very certainly winter sport on the Montreux Oberland Bernois railway. It would be false for you to deny that."

"I do not deny it. I simply said there is no winter sport at Montreux."

"I question that," the other official said. "I question that

statement."

"I hold to that statement."

"I question that statement. I myself have *luge-ed* into the streets of Montreux. I have done it not once but several times. Luge-ing is certainly winter sport."

The other official turned to me.

"Is luge-ing your idea of winter sport, sir? I tell you you would be very comfortable here in Locarno. You would find the climate healthy, you would find the environs attractive. You would like it very much."

"The gentleman has expressed a wish to go to Montreux."

"What is luge-ing?" I asked.

"You see he has never even heard of luge-ing!"

That meant a great deal to the second official. He was pleased by that.

"Luge-ing," said the first official, "is tobogganing."

"I beg to differ," the other official shook his head. "I must differ again. The toboggan is very different from the luge. The toboggan is constructed in Canada of flat laths. The luge is a common sled with runners. Accuracy means something."

"Couldn't we toboggan?" I asked.

"Of course you could toboggan," the first official said. "You could toboggan very well. Excellent Canadian toboggans are sold in Montreux. Ochs Brothers sell toboggans. They import their own toboggans."

The second official turned away. "Tobogganing," he said, "requires a special *piste.* You could not toboggan into the streets of Montreux. Where are you stopping here?"

"We don't know," I said. "We just drove in from Brissago. The carriage is outside."

"You make no mistake in going to Montreux," the first official said. "You will find the climate delightful and beautiful. You will have no distance to go for winter sport."

“If you really want winter sport,” the second official said, “you will go to the Engadine or to Murren. I must protest against your being advised to go to Montreux for the winter sport.”

“At Les Avants above Montreux there is excellent winter sport of every sort.” The champion of Montreux glared at his colleague.

“Gentlemen,” I said, “I am afraid we must go. My cousin is very tired. We will go tentatively to Montreux.”

“I congratulate you,” the first official shook my hand.

“I believe that you will regret leaving Locarno,” the second official said. “At any rate you will report to the police at Montreux.”

“There will be no unpleasantness with the police,” the first official assured me. “You will find all the inhabitants extremely courteous and friendly.”

“Thank you both very much,” I said. “We appreciate your advice very much.”

“Goodbye,” Catherine said. “Thank you both very much.”

They bowed us to the door, the champion of Locarno a little coldly. We went down the steps and into the carriage.

“My God, darling,” Catherine said. “Couldn’t we have gotten away any sooner?” I gave the name of a hotel one of the officials had recommended to the driver. He picked up the reins.

“You’ve forgotten the army,” Catherine said. The soldier was standing by the carriage. I gave him a ten-lira note. “I have no Swiss money yet,” I said. He thanked me, saluted and went off. The carriage started and we drove to the hotel.

“How did you happen to pick out Montreux?” I asked Catherine. “Do you really want to go there?”

“It was the first place I could think of,” she said. “It’s not a bad place. We can find some place up in the mountains.”

“Are you sleepy?”

“I’m asleep right now.”

“We’ll get a good sleep. Poor Cat, you had a long bad night.”

“I had a lovely time,” Catherine said. “Especially when you

sailed with the umbrella."

"Can you realize we're in Switzerland?"

"No, I'm afraid I'll wake up and it won't be true."

"I am too."

"It is true, isn't it, darling? I'm not just driving down to the *stazione* in Milan to see you off."

"I hope not."

"Don't say that. It frightens me. Maybe that's where we're going."

"I'm so groggy I don't know," I said.

"Let me see your hands."

I put them out. They were both blistered raw.

"There's no hole in my side," I said.

"Don't be sacrilegious."

I felt very tired and vague in the head. The exhilaration was all gone. The carriage was going along the street.

"Poor hands," Catherine said.

"Don't touch them," I said. "By God I don't know where we are. Where are we going, driver?" The driver stopped his horse.

"To the Hotel Metropole. Don't you want to go there?"

"Yes," I said. "It's all right, Cat."

"It's all right, darling. Don't be upset. We'll get a good sleep and you won't feel groggy tomorrow."

"I get pretty groggy," I said. "It's like a comic opera to-day. Maybe I'm hungry."

"You're just tired, darling. You'll be fine." The carriage pulled up before the hotel. Someone came out to take our bags.

"I feel all right," I said. We were down on the pavement going into the hotel.

"I know you'll be all right. You're just tired. You've been up a long time."

"Anyhow we're here."

"Yes, we're really here."

We followed the boy with the bags into the hotel.

BOOK FIVE

Chapter XXXVIII

That fall the snow came very late. We lived in a brown wooden house in the pine trees on the side of the mountain and at night there was frost so that there was thin ice over the water in the two pitchers on the dresser in the morning. Mrs. Guttingen came into the room early in the morning to shut the windows and started a fire in the tall porcelain stove. The pine wood crackled and sparked and then the fire roared in the stove and the second time Mrs. Guttingen came into the room she brought big chunks of wood for the fire and a pitcher of hot water. When the room was warm she brought in breakfast. Sitting up in bed eating breakfast we could see the lake and the mountains across the lake on the French side. There was snow on the tops of the mountains and the lake was a gray steel-blue.

Outside, in front of the chalet a road went up the mountain. The wheel ruts and ridges were iron hard with the frost, and the road climbed steadily through the forest and up and around the mountain to where there were meadows, and barns and cabins in the meadows at the edge of the woods looking across the valley The valley was deep and there was a stream at the bottom that flowed down into the lake and when the wind blew across the valley you could hear the stream in the rocks.

Sometimes we went off the road and on a path through the pine forest. The floor of the forest was soft to walk on; the frost did not harden it as it did the road. But we did not mind the hardness of the road because we had nails in the soles and heels of our boots and the heel nails bit on the frozen ruts and with nailed boots it was

good walking on the road and invigorating. But it was lovely walking in the woods.

In front of the house where we lived the mountain went down steeply to the little plain along the lake and we sat on the porch of the house in the sun and saw the winding of the road down the mountain-side and the terraced vineyards on the side of the lower mountain, the vines all dead now for the winter and the fields divided by stone walls, and below the vineyards the houses of the town on the narrow plain along the lake shore. There was an island with two trees on the lake and the trees looked like the double sails of a fishing-boat. The mountains were sharp and steep on the other side of the lake and down at the end of the lake was the plain of the Rhone Valley flat between the two ranges of mountains; and up the valley where the mountains cut it off was the Dent du Midi. It was a high snowy mountain and it dominated the valley but it was so far away that it did not make a shadow.

When the sun was bright we ate lunch on the porch but the rest of the time we ate upstairs in a small room with plain wooden walls and a big stove in the corner. We bought books and magazines in the town and a copy of “Hoyle” and learned many two-handed card games. The small room with the stove was our living room. There were two comfortable chairs and a table for books and magazines and we played cards on the dining-table when it was cleared away. Mr. and Mrs. Guttingen lived downstairs and we would hear them talking sometimes in the evening and they were very happy together too. He had been a headwaiter and she had worked as maid in the same hotel and they had saved their money to buy this place. They had a son who was studying to be a headwaiter. He was at a hotel in Zurich. Downstairs there was a parlor where they sold wine and beer, and sometimes in the evening we would hear carts stop outside on the road and men come up the steps to go in the parlor to drink wine.

There was a box of wood in the hall outside the living-room and

I kept up the fire from it. But we did not stay up very late. We went to bed in the dark in the big bedroom and when I was undressed I opened the windows and saw the night and the cold stars and the pine trees below the window and then got into bed as fast as I could. It was lovely in bed with the air so cold and clear and the night outside the window. We slept well and if I woke in the night I knew it was from only one cause and I would shift the feather bed over, very softly so that Catherine would not be wakened and then go back to sleep again, warm and with the new lightness of thin covers. The war seemed as far away as the football games of someone else's college. But I knew from the papers that they were still fighting in the mountains because the snow would not come.

Sometimes we walked down the mountain into Montreux. There was a path went down the mountain but it was steep and so usually we took the road and walked down on the wide hard road between fields and then below between the stone walls of the vineyards and on down between the houses of the villages along the way. There were three villages; Chernex, Fontanivent, and the other I forget. Then along the road we passed an old square-built stone chateau on a ledge on the side of the mountain-side with the terraced fields of vines, each vine tied to a stick to hold it up, the vines dry and brown and the earth ready for the snow and the lake down below flat and gray as steel. The road went down a long grade below the chateau and then turned to the right and went down very steeply and paved with cobbles, into Montreux.

We did not know anyone in Montreux. We walked along beside the lake and saw the swans and the many gulls and terns that flew up when you came close and screamed while they looked down at the water. Out on the lake there were flocks of grebes, small and dark, and leaving trails in the water when they swam. In the town we walked along the main street and looked in the windows of the shops. There were many big hotels that were closed but most of the shops were open and the people were very glad to see us. There was

a fine coiffeur's place where Catherine went to have her hair done. The woman who ran it was very cheerful and the only person we knew in Montreux. While Catherine was there I went up to a beer place and drank dark Munich beer and read the papers. I read the *Carriere della Sera* and the English and American papers from Paris. All the advertisements were blacked out, supposedly to prevent communication in that way with the enemy. The papers were bad reading. Everything was going very badly everywhere. I sat back in the corner with a heavy mug of dark beer and an opened glazed-paper package of pretzels and ate the pretzels for the salty flavor and the good way they made the beer taste and read about disaster. I thought Catherine would come by but she did not come, so I hung the papers back on the rack, paid for my beer and went up the street to look for her. The day was cold and dark and wintry and the stone of the houses looked cold. Catherine was still in the hairdresser's shop. The woman was waving her hair. I sat in the little booth and watched. It was exciting to watch and Catherine smiled and talked to me and my voice was a little thick from being excited. The tongs made a pleasant clicking sound and I could see Catherine in three mirrors and it was pleasant and warm in the booth. Then the woman put up Catherine's hair, and Catherine looked in the mirror and changed it a little, taking out and putting in pins; then stood up. "I'm sorry to have taken such a long time."

"Monsieur was very interested. Were you not, monsieur?" the woman smiled.

"Yes," I said.

We went out and up the street. It was cold and wintry and the wind was blowing. "Oh, darling, I love you so," I said.

"Don't we have a fine time?" Catherine said. "Look. Let's go someplace and have beer instead of tea. It's very good for young Catherine. It keeps her small."

"Young Catherine," I said. "That loafer."

"She's been very good," Catherine said. "She makes very little

trouble. The doctor says beer will be good for me and keep her small."

"If you keep her small enough and she's a boy, maybe he will be a jockey."

"I suppose if we really have this child we ought to get married," Catherine said. We were in the beer place at the corner table. It was getting dark outside. It was still early but the day was dark and the dusk was coming early.

"Let's get married now," I said.

"No," Catherine said. "It's too embarrassing now. I show too plainly. I won't go before anyone and be married in this state."

"I wish we'd gotten married."

"I suppose it would have been better. But when could we, darling?"

"I don't know."

"I know one thing. I'm not going to be married in this splendid matronly state."

"You're not matronly."

"Oh yes, I am, darling. The hairdresser asked me if this was our first. I lied and said no, we had two boys and two girls."

"When will we be married?"

"Any time after I'm thin again. We want to have a splendid wedding with everyone thinking what a handsome young couple."

"And you're not worried?"

"Darling, why should I be worried? The only time I ever felt badly was when I felt like a whore in Milan and that only lasted seven minutes and besides it was the room furnishings. Don't I make you a good wife?"

"You're a lovely wife."

"Then don't be too technical, darling. I'll marry you as soon as I'm thin again."

"All right."

"Do you think I ought to drink another beer? The doctor said I

was rather narrow in the hips and it's all for the best if we keep young Catherine small."

"What else did he say?" I was worried.

"Nothing. I have a wonderful blood-pressure, darling. He admired my blood-pressure greatly."

"What did he say about you being too narrow in the hips?"

"Nothing. Nothing at all. He said I shouldn't ski."

"Quite right."

"He said it was too late to start if I'd never done it before. He said I could ski if I wouldn't fall down."

"He's just a big-hearted joker."

"Really he was very nice. We'll have him when the baby comes."

"Did you ask him if you ought to get married?"

"No. I told him we'd been married four years. You see, darling, if I marry you I'll be an American and any time we're married under American law the child is legitimate."

"Where did you find that out?"

"In the *New York World Almanac* in the library."

"You're a grand girl."

"I'll be very glad to be an American and we'll go to America won't we, darling? I want to see Niagara Falls."

"You're a fine girl."

"There's something else I want to see but I can't remember it."

"The stockyards?"

"No. I can't remember it."

"The Woolworth building?"

"No."

"The Grand Canyon?"

"No. But I'd like to see that."

"What was it?"

"The Golden Gate! That's what I want to see. Where is the Golden Gate?"

"San Francisco."

“Then let’s go there. I want to see San Francisco anyway.”

“All right. We’ll go there.”

“Now let’s go up the mountain. Should we? Can we get the M.O.B.?”

“There’s a train a little after five.”

“Let’s get that.”

“All right. I’ll drink one more beer first.”

When we went out to go up the street and climb the stairs to the station it was very cold. A cold wind was coming down the Rhone Valley. There were lights in the shop windows and we climbed the steep stone stairway to the upper street, then up another stairs to the station. The electric train was there waiting, all the lights on. There was a dial that showed when it left. The clock hands pointed to ten minutes after five. I looked at the station clock. It was five minutes after. As we got on board I saw the motorman and conductor coming out of the station wine-shop. We sat down and opened the window. The train was electrically heated and stuffy but fresh cold air came in through the window.

“Are you tired, Cat?” I asked.

“No. I feel splendid.”

“It isn’t a long ride.”

“I like the ride,” she said. “Don’t worry about me, darling. I feel fine.”

Snow did not come until three days before Christmas. We woke one morning and it was snowing. We stayed in bed with the fire roaring in the stove and watched the snow fall. Mrs. Guttingen took away the breakfast trays and put more wood in the stove. It was a big snow storm. She said it had started about midnight. I went to the window and looked out but could not see across the road. It was blowing and snowing wildly. I went back to bed and we lay and talked.

“I wish I could ski,” Catherine said. “It’s rotten not to be able to ski”.

“We’ll get a bobsled and come down the road. That’s no worse for you than riding in a car.”

“Won’t it be rough?”

“We can see.”

“I hope it won’t be too rough.”

“After a while we’ll take a walk in the snow.”

“Before lunch,” Catherine said, “so we’ll have a good appetite.”

“I’m always hungry.”

“So am I.”

We went out in the snow but it was drifted so that we could not walk far. I went ahead and made a trail down to the station but when we reached there we had gone far enough. The snow was blowing so we could hardly see and we went into the little inn by the station and swept each other off with a broom and sat on a bench and had vermouths.

“It is a big storm,” the barmaid said.

“Yes.”

“The snow is very late this year.”

“Yes.”

“Could I eat a chocolate bar?” Catherine asked. “Or is it too close to lunch? I’m always hungry.”

“Go on and eat one,” I said.

“I’ll take one with filberts,” Catherine said.

“They are very good,” the girl said, “I like them the best.”

“I’ll have another vermouth,” I said.

When we came out to start back up the road our track was filled in by the snow. There were only faint indentations where the holes had been. The snow blew in our faces so we could hardly see. We brushed off and went in to have lunch. Mr. Guttingen served the lunch.

“Tomorrow there will be skiing,” he said. “Do you ski, Mr. Henry?”

“No. But I want to learn.”

“You will learn very easily. My boy will be here for Christmas and he will teach you.”

“That’s fine. When does he come?”

“Tomorrow night.”

When we were sitting by the stove in the little room after lunch looking out the window at the snow coming down Catherine said, “Wouldn’t you like to go on a trip somewhere by yourself, darling, and be with men and ski?”

“No. Why should I?”

“I should think sometimes you would want to see other people besides me.”

“Do you want to see other people?”

“No.”

“Neither do I.”

“I know. But you’re different. I’m having a child and that makes me contented not to do anything. I know I’m awfully stupid now and I talk too much and I think you ought to get away so you won’t be tired of me.”

“Do you want me to go away?”

“No. I want you to stay.”

“That’s what I’m going to do.”

“Come over here,” she said. “I want to feel the bump on your head. It’s a big bump.” She ran her finger over it. “Darling, would you like to grow a beard?”

“Would you like me to?”

“It might be fun. I’d like to see you with a beard.”

“All right. I’ll grow one. I’ll start now this minute. It’s a good idea. It will give me something to do.”

“Are you worried because you haven’t anything to do?”

“No. I like it. I have a fine life. Don’t you?”

“I have a lovely life. But I was afraid because I’m big now that maybe I was a bore to you.”

“Oh, Cat. You don’t know how crazy I am about you.”

“This way?”

“Just the way you are. I have a fine time. Don’t we have a good life?”

“I do, but I thought maybe you were restless.”

“No. Sometimes I wonder about the front and about people I know but I don’t worry. I don’t think about anything much.”

“Who do you wonder about?”

“About Rinaldi and the priest and lots of people I know. But I don’t think about them much. I don’t want to think about the war. I’m through with it.”

“What are you thinking about now?”

“Nothing.”

“Yes you were. Tell me.”

“I was wondering whether Rinaldi had the syphilis.”

“Was that all?”

“Yes.”

“Has he the syphilis?”

“I don’t know.”

“I’m glad you haven’t. Did you ever have anything like that?”

“I had gonorrhea.”

“I don’t want to hear about it. Was it very painful, darling?”

“Very.”

“I wish I’d had it.”

“No you don’t.”

“I do. I wish I’d had it to be like you. I wish I’d stayed with all your girls so I could make fun of them to you.”

“That’s a pretty picture.”

“It’s not a pretty picture you having gonorrhea.”

“I know it. Look at it snow now.”

“I’d rather look at you. Darling, why don’t you let your hair grow?”

“How grow?”

“Just grow a little longer.”

“It’s long enough now.”

“No, let it grow a little longer and I could cut mine and we’d be just alike only one of us blonde and one of us dark.”

“I wouldn’t let you cut yours.”

“It would be fun. I’m tired of it. It’s an awful nuisance in the bed at night.”

“I like it.”

“Wouldn’t you like it short?”

“I might. I like it the way it is.”

“It might be nice short. Then we’d both be alike. Oh, darling, I want you so much I want to be you too.”

“You are. We’re the same one.”

“I know it. At night we are.”

“The nights are grand.”

“I want us to be all mixed up. I don’t want you to go away. I just said that. You go if you want to. But hurry right back. Why, darling, I don’t live at all when I’m not with you.”

“I won’t ever go away,” I said. “I’m no good when you’re not there. I haven’t any life at all anymore.”

“I want you to have a life. I want you to have a fine life. But we’ll have it together, won’t we?”

“And now do you want me to stop growing my beard or let it go on.)”

“Go on. Grow it. It will be exciting. Maybe it will be done for New Year’s.”

“Now do you want to play chess?”

“I’d rather play with you.”

“No. Let’s play chess.”

“And afterward we’ll play?”

“Yes.”

“All right.”

I got out the chess-board and arranged the pieces. It was still snowing hard outside.

One time in the night I woke up and knew that Catherine was awake too. The moon was shining in the window and made shadows on the bed from the bars on the windowpanes.

"Are you awake, sweetheart?"

"Yes. Can't you sleep?"

"I just woke up thinking about how I was nearly crazy when I first met you. Do you remember?"

"You were just a little crazy."

"I'm never that way anymore. I'm grand now. You say grand so sweetly. Say grand."

"Grand."

"Oh, you're sweet. And I'm not crazy now. I'm just very, very, very happy."

"Go on to sleep," I said.

"All right. Let's go to sleep at exactly the same moment."

"All right."

But we did not. I was awake for quite a long time thinking about things and watching Catherine sleeping, the moonlight on her face. Then I went to sleep, too.

Chapter XXXIX

By the middle of January I had a beard and the winter had settled into bright cold days and hard cold nights. We could walk on the roads again. The snow was packed hard and smooth by the hay sleds and wood-sledges and the logs that were hauled down the mountain. The snow layover all the country, down almost to Montreux. The mountains on the other side of the lake were all white and the plain of the Rhone Valley was covered. We took long walks on the other side of the mountain to the Bains de I'Alliaz, Catherine wore hobnailed boots and a cape and carried a stick with a sharp steel point. She did not look big with the cape and we would not walk too fast but stopped and sat on logs by the roadside to rest when she was tired.

There was an inn in the trees at the Bains de l'Alliaz where the woodcutters stopped to drink, and we sat inside warmed by the stove and drank hot red wine with spices and lemon in it. They called it *glühwein* and it was a good thing to warm you and to celebrate with. The inn was dark and smoky inside and afterward when you went out the cold air came sharply into your lungs and numbed the edge of your nose as you inhaled. We looked back at the inn with light coming from the windows and the woodcutters' horses stamping and jerking their heads outside to keep warm. There was frost on the hairs of their muzzles and their breathing made plumes of frost in the air. Going up the road toward home the road was smooth and slippery for a while and the ice orange from the horses until the wood-hauling track turned off. Then the road was clean-packed snow and led through the woods, and twice

coming home in the evening, we saw foxes.

It was a fine country and every time that we went out it was fun.

"You have a splendid beard now," Catherine said. "It looks just like the woodcutters'. Did you see the man with the tiny gold earrings?"

"He's a chamois hunter," I said. "They wear them because they say it makes them hear better."

"Really? I don't believe it. I think they wear them to show they are chamois hunters. Are there chamois near here?"

"Yes, beyond the Dent de Jaman."

"It was fun seeing the fox."

"When he sleeps he wraps that tail around him to keep warm."

"It must be a lovely feeling."

"I always wanted to have a tail like that. Wouldn't it be fun if we had brushes like a fox?"

"It might be very difficult dressing."

"We'd have clothes made, or live in a country where it wouldn't make any difference."

"We live in a country where nothing makes any difference. Isn't it grand how we never see anyone? You don't want to see people do you, darling?"

"No."

"Should we sit here just a minute? I'm a little bit tired."

We sat close together on the logs. Ahead the road went down through the forest.

"She won't come between us, will she? The little brat."

"No. We won't let her."

"How are we for money?"

"We have plenty. They honored the last sight draft."

"Won't your family try and get hold of you now they know you're in Switzerland?"

"Probably. I'll write them something."

"Haven't you written them?"

"No. Only the sight draft."

"Thank God I'm not your family."

"I'll send them a cable."

"Don't you care anything about them?"

"I did, but we quarrelled so much it wore itself out."

"I think I'd like them. I'd probably like them very much."

"Let's not talk about them or I'll start to worry about them." After a while I said, "Let's go on if you're rested."

"I'm rested."

We went on down the road. It was dark now and the snow squeaked under our boots. The night was dry and cold and very clear.

"I love your beard," Catherine said. "It's a great success. It looks so stiff and fierce and it's very soft and a great pleasure."

"Do you like it better than without?"

"I think so. You know, darling, I'm not going to cut my hair now until after young Catherine's born. I look too big and matronly now. But after she's born and I'm thin again I'm going to cut it and then I'll be a fine new and different girl for you. We'll go together and get it cut, or I'll go alone and come and surprise you."

I did not say anything.

"You won't say I can't, will you?"

"No. I think it would be exciting."

"Oh, you're so sweet. And maybe I'd look lovely, darling, and be so thin and exciting to you and you'll fall in love with me all over again."

"Hell," I said, "I love you enough now. What do you want to do? Ruin me?"

"Yes. I want to ruin you."

"Good," I said, "that's what I want too."

Chapter XL

We had a fine life. We lived through the months of January and February and the winter was very fine and we were very happy. There had been short thaws when the wind blew warm and the snow softened and the air felt like spring, but always the clear hard cold had come again and the winter had returned. In March came the first break in the winter. In the night it started raining. It rained on all morning and turned the snow to slush and made the mountain-side dismal. There were clouds over the lake and over the valley. It was raining high up the mountain. Catherine wore heavy overshoes and I wore Mr. Guttingen's rubber-boots and we walked to the station under an umbrella, through the slush and the running water that was washing the ice of the roads bare, to stop at the pub before lunch for a vermouth. Outside we could hear the rain.

"Do you think we ought to move into town?"

"What do you think?" Catherine asked.

"If the winter is over and the rain keeps up it won't be fun up here. How long is it before young Catherine?"

"About a month. Perhaps a little more."

"We might go down and stay in Montreux."

"Why don't we go to Lausanne? That's where the hospital is."

"All right. But I thought maybe that was too big a town."

"We can be as much alone in a bigger town and Lausanne might be nice."

"When should we go?"

"I don't care. Whenever you want, darling. I don't want to leave here if you don't want."

"Let's see how the weather turns out."

It rained for three days. The snow was all gone now on the mountain-side below the station. The road was a torrent of muddy snow-water. It was too wet and slushy to go out. On the morning of the third day of rain we decided to go down into town.

"That is all right, Mr. Henry," Guttingen said. "You do not have to give me any notice. I did not think you would want to stay now the bad weather is come."

"We have to be near the hospital anyway on account of Madame," I said.

"I understand," he said. "Will you come back some time and stay, with the little one?"

"Yes, if you would have room."

"In the spring when it is nice you could come and enjoy it. We could put the little one and the nurse in the big room that is closed now and you and Madame could have your same room looking out over the lake."

"I'll write about coming," I said. We packed and left on the train that went down after lunch. Mr. and Mrs. Guttingen came down to the station with us and he hauled our baggage down on a sled through the slush. They stood beside the station in the rain waving goodbye.

"They were very sweet," Catherine said.

"They were fine to us."

We took the train to Lausanne from Montreux. Looking out the window toward where we had lived you could not see the mountains for the clouds. The train stopped in Vevey, then went on, passing the lake on one side and on the other the wet brown fields and the bare woods and the wet houses. We came into Lausanne and went into a medium-sized hotel to stay. It was still raining as we drove through the streets and into the carriage entrance of the hotel. The concierge with brass keys on his lapels, the elevator, the carpets on the floors, and the white washbowls with shining

fixtures, the brass bed and the big comfortable bedroom all seemed very great luxury after the Guttingens. The windows of the room looked out on a wet garden with a wall topped by an iron fence. Across the street, which sloped steeply, was another hotel with a similar wall and garden. I looked out at the rain falling in the fountain of the garden.

Catherine turned on all the lights and commenced unpacking. I ordered a whiskey and soda and lay on the bed and read the papers I had bought at the station. It was March, 1918, and the German offensive had started in France. I drank the whiskey and soda and read while Catherine unpacked and moved around the room.

"You know what I have to get, darling," she said.

"What?"

"Baby clothes. There aren't many people reach my time without baby things."

"You can buy them."

"I know. That's what I'll do tomorrow. I'll find out what is necessary."

"You ought to know. You were a nurse."

"But so few of the soldiers had babies in the hospitals."

"I did."

She hit me with the pillow and spilled the whiskey and soda.

"I'll order you another," she said. "I'm sorry I spilled it."

"There wasn't much left. Come on over to the bed."

"No. I have to try and make this room look like something."

"Like what?"

"Like our home."

"Hang out the Allied flags."

"Oh shut up."

"Say it again."

"Shut up."

"You say it so cautiously," I said. "As though you didn't want to offend anyone."

“I don’t.”

“Then come over to the bed.”

“All right.” She came and sat on the bed. “I know I’m no fun for you, darling. I’m like a big flour-barrel.”

“No you’re not. You’re beautiful and you’re sweet.”

“I’m just something very ungainly that you’ve married.”

“No you’re not. You’re more beautiful all the time.”

“But I will be thin again, darling.”

“You’re thin now.”

‘’You’ve been drinking.”

“Just whiskey and soda.”

“There’s another one coming,” she said. “And then should we order dinner up here?”

“That will be good.”

“Then we won’t go out, will we? We’ll just stay in tonight.”

“And play,” I said.

“I’ll drink some wine,” Catherine said. “It won’t hurt me. Maybe we can get some of our old white capri.”

“I know we can,” I said. “They’ll have Italian wines at a hotel this size.”

The waiter knocked at the door. He brought the whiskey in a glass with ice and beside the glass on a tray a small bottle of soda.

“Thank you,” I said. “Put it down there. Will you please have dinner for two brought up here and two bottles of dry white capri in ice. “

“Do you wish to commence your dinner with soup?”

“Do you want soup, Cat?”

“Please.”

“Bring soup for one.”

“Thank you, sir.” He went out and shut the door. I went back to the papers and the war in the papers and poured the soda slowly over the ice into the whiskey. I would have to tell them not to put ice in the whiskey. Let them bring the ice separately. That way you

could tell how much whiskey there was and it would not suddenly be too thin from the soda. I would get a bottle of whiskey and have them bring ice and soda. That was the sensible way. Good whiskey was very pleasant. It was one of the pleasant parts of life.

"What are you thinking, darling?"

"About whiskey."

"What about whiskey?"

"About how nice it is."

Catherine made a face. "All right," she said.

We stayed at that hotel three weeks. It was not bad; the dining room was usually empty and very often we ate in our room at night. We walked in the town and took the cogwheel railway down to Ouchy and walked beside the lake. The weather became quite warm and it was like spring. We wished we were back in the mountains but the spring weather lasted only a few days and then the cold rawness of the breaking-up of winter came again.

Catherine bought the things she needed for the baby, up in the town. I went to a gymnasium in the arcade to box for exercise. I usually went up there in the morning while Catherine stayed late in bed. On the days of false spring it was very nice, after boxing and taking a shower, to walk along the streets smelling the spring in the air and stop at a cafe to sit and watch the people and read the paper and drink a vermouth; then go down to the hotel and have lunch with Catherine. The professor at the boxing gymnasium wore mustaches and was very precise and jerky and went all to pieces if you started after him. But it was pleasant in the gym. There was good air and light and I worked quite hard, skipping rope, shadow-boxing, doing abdominal exercises lying on the floor in a patch of sunlight that came through the open window, and occasionally scaring the professor when we boxed. I could not shadow-box in front of the narrow long mirror at first because it looked so strange to see a man with a beard boxing. But finally I just thought it was funny. I wanted to take off the beard as soon as I started boxing but

Catherine did not want me to.

Sometimes Catherine and I went for rides out in the country in a carriage. It was nice to ride when the days were pleasant and we found two good places where we could ride out to eat. Catherine could not walk very far now and I loved to ride out along the country roads with her. When there was a good day we had a splendid time and we never had a bad time. We knew the baby was very close now and it gave us both a feeling as though something were hurrying us and we could not lose any time together.

Chapter XLI

One morning I awoke about three o'clock hearing Catherine stirring in the bed.

"Are you all right, Cat?"

"I've been having some pains, darling."

"Regularly?"

"No, not very."

"If you have them at all regularly we'll go to the hospital."

I was very sleepy and went back to sleep. A little while later I woke again.

"Maybe you'd better call up the doctor," Catherine said. "I think maybe this is it."

I went to the phone and called the doctor. "How often are the pains coming?" he asked.

"How often are they coming, Cat?"

"I should think every quarter of an hour."

"You should go to the hospital, then," the doctor said. "I will dress and go there right away myself."

I hung up and called the garage near the station to send up a taxi. No one answered the phone for a long time. Then I finally got a man who promised to send up a taxi at once. Catherine was dressing. Her bag was all packed with the things she would need at the hospital and the baby things. Outside in the hall I rang for the elevator. There was no answer. I went downstairs. There was no one downstairs except the night-watchman. I brought the elevator up myself, put Catherine's bag in it, she stepped in and we went down. The night-watchman opened the door for us and we sat

outside on the stone slabs beside the stairs down to the driveway and waited for the taxi. The night was clear and the stars were out. Catherine was very excited.

"I'm so glad it's started," she said. "Now in a little while it will be all over."

"You're a good brave girl."

"I'm not afraid. I wish the taxi would come, though."

We heard it coming up the street and saw its headlights. It turned into the driveway and I helped Catherine in and the driver put the bag up in front.

"Drive to the hospital," I said.

We went out of the driveway and started up the hill.

At the hospital we went in and I carried the bag. There was a woman at the desk who wrote down Catherine's name, age, address, relatives and religion, in a book. She said she had no religion and the woman drew a line in the space after that word. She gave her name as Catherine Henry.

"I will take you up to your room," she said. We went up in an elevator. The woman stopped it and we stepped out and followed her down a hall. Catherine held tight to my arm.

"This is the room," the woman said. "Will you please undress and get into bed? Here is a nightgown for you to wear."

"I have a nightgown," Catherine said.

"It is better for you to wear this nightgown," the woman said.

I went outside and sat on a chair in the hallway.

"You can come in now," the woman said from the doorway. Catherine was lying in the narrow bed wearing a plain, square-cut nightgown that looked as though it were made of rough sheeting. She smiled at me.

"I'm having fine pains now," she said. The woman was holding her wrist and timing the pains with a watch.

"That was a big one," Catherine said. I saw it on her face.

"Where's the doctor?" I asked the woman.

“He’s lying down sleeping. He will be here when he is needed.”

“I must do something for Madame, now,” the nurse said. “Would you please step out again?”

I went out into the hall. It was a bare hall with two windows and closed doors all down the corridor. It smelled of hospital. I sat on the chair and looked at the floor and prayed for Catherine.

“You can come in,” the nurse said. I went in.

“Hello, darling,” Catherine said ..

“How is it?”

“They are coming quite often now.” Her face drew up. Then she smiled.

“That was a real one. Do you want to put your hand on my back again, nurse?”

“If it helps you,” the nurse said.

“You go away, darling,” Catherine said. “Go out and get something to eat. I may do this for a long time the nurse says.”

“The first labor is usually protracted,” the nurse said.

“Please go out and get something to eat,” Catherine said. “I’m fine, really.”

“I’ll stay awhile,” I said.

The pains came quite regularly, then slackened off. Catherine was very excited. When the pains were bad she called them good ones. When they started to fall off she was disappointed and ashamed.

“You go out, darling,” she said. “I think you are just making me self-conscious.” Her face tied up. “There. That was better. I so want to be a good wife and have this child without any foolishness. Please go and get some breakfast, darling, and then come back. I won’t miss you. Nurse is splendid to me.”

“You have plenty of time for breakfast,” the nurse said.

“I’ll go then. Goodbye, sweet.”

“Goodbye,” Catherine said, “and have a fine breakfast for me too.”

“Where can I get breakfast?” I asked the nurse.

“There’s a cafe down the street at the square,” she said. “It should be open now.”

Outside it was getting light. I walked down the empty street to the café . There was a light in the window. I went in and stood at the zinc bar and an old man served me a glass of white wine and a brioche. The brioche was yesterday’s. I dipped it in the wine and then drank a glass of coffee.

“What do you do at this hour?” the old man asked.

“My wife is in labor at the hospital.”

“So. I wish you good luck.”

“Give me another glass of wine.”

He poured it from the bottle slopping it over a little so some ran down on the zinc. I drank this glass, paid and went out. Outside along the street were the refuse cans from the houses waiting for the collector. A dog was nosing at one of the cans.

“What do you want?” I asked and looked in the can to see if there was anything I could pull out for him; there was nothing on top but coffee-grounds, dust and some dead flowers.

“There isn’t anything, dog,” I said. The dog crossed the street. I went up the stairs in the hospital to the floor Catherine was on and down the hall to her room. I knocked on the door. There was no answer. I opened the door; the room was empty, except for Catherine’s bag on a chair and her dressing-gown hanging on a hook on the wall. I went out and down the hall, looking for somebody. I found a nurse.

“Where is Madame Henry?”

“A lady has just gone to the delivery room.”

“Where is it?”

“I will show you.”

She took me down to the end of the hall. The door of the room was partly open. I could see Catherine lying on a table, covered by a sheet. The nurse was on one side and the doctor stood on the

other side of the table beside some cylinders. The doctor held a rubber mask attached to a tube in one hand.

"I will give you a gown and you can go in," the nurse said.

"Come in here, please."

She put a white gown on me and pinned it at the neck in back with a safety pin.

"Now you can go in," she said. I went into the room.

"Hello, darling," Catherine said in a strained voice. "I'm not doing much."

"You are Mr. Henry?" the doctor asked.

"Yes. How is everything going, doctor?"

"Things are going very well," the doctor said. "We came in here where it is easy to give gas for the pains."

"I want it now," Catherine said. The doctor placed the rubber mask over her face and turned a dial and I watched Catherine breathing deeply and rapidly. Then she pushed the mask away. The doctor shut off the petcock.

"That wasn't a very big one. I had a very big one a while ago. The doctor made me go clear out, didn't you, doctor?" Her voice was strange. It rose on the word doctor.

The doctor smiled.

"I want it again," Catherine said. She held the rubber tight to her face and breathed fast. I heard her moaning a little. Then she pulled the mask away and smiled.

"That was a big one," she said. "That was a very big one. Don't you worry, darling. You go away. Go have another breakfast."

"I'll stay," I said.

We had gone to the hospital about three o'clock in the morning. At noon Catherine was still in the delivery room. The pains had slackened again. She looked very tired and worn now but she was still cheerful.

"I'm not any good, darling," she said. "I'm so sorry. I thought I would do it very easily. Now—there's one—" she reached out her

hand for the mask and held it over her face. The doctor moved the dial and watched her. In a little while it was over.

"It wasn't much," Catherine said. She smiled. "I'm a fool about the gas. It's wonderful."

"We'll get some for the home," I said.

"There one comes," Catherine said quickly. The doctor turned the dial and looked at his watch.

"What is the interval now?" I asked.

"About a minute."

"Don't you want lunch?"

"I will have something pretty soon," he said.

"You must have something to eat, doctor," Catherine said. "I'm so sorry I go on so long. Couldn't my husband give me the gas?"

"If you wish," the doctor said. "You turn it to the numeral two."

"I see," I said. There was a marker on a dial that turned with a handle.

"I want it now," Catherine said. She held the mask tight to her face. I turned the dial to number two and when Catherine put down the mask I turned it off. It was very good of the doctor to let me do something.

"Did you do it, darling?" Catherine asked. She stroked my wrist.

"Sure."

"You're so lovely." She was a little drunk from the gas.

"I will eat from a tray in the next room," the doctor said. "You can call me any moment." While the time passed I watched him eat, then, after a while, I saw that he was lying down and smoking a cigarette. Catherine was getting very tired.

"Do you think I'll ever have this baby?" she asked.

"Yes, of course you will."

"I try as hard as I can. I push down but it goes away. *There it comes. Give it to me."*

At two o'clock I went out and had lunch. There were a few men in the cafe sitting with coffee and glasses of kirsch or marc on the

tables. I sat down at a table. “Can I eat?” I asked the waiter.

“It is past time for lunch.”

“Isn’t there anything for all hours?”

“You can have *choucroute.”*

“Give me *choucroute* and beer.”

“A demi or a bock?”

“A light demi.”

The waiter brought a dish of sauerkraut with a slice of ham over the top and a sausage buried in the hot wine-soaked cabbage. I ate it and drank the beer. I was very hungry. I watched the people at the tables in the cafe. At one table they were playing cards. Two men at the table next me were talking and smoking. The cafe was full of smoke. The zinc bar, where I had breakfasted, had three people behind it now; the old man, a plump woman in a black dress who sat behind a counter and kept track of everything served to the tables, and a boy in an apron. I wondered how many children the woman had and what it had been like.

When I was through with the *choucroute* I went back to the hospital. The street was all clean now. There were no refuse cans out. The day was cloudy but the sun was trying to come through.

I rode upstairs in the elevator, stepped out and went down the hall to Catherine’s room, where I had left my white gown. I put it on and pinned it in back at the neck. I looked in the glass and saw myself looking like a fake doctor with a beard. I went down the hall to the delivery room. The door was closed and I knocked. No one answered so I turned the handle and went in. The doctor sat by Catherine. The nurse was doing something at the other end of the room.

“Here is your husband,” the doctor said.

“Oh, darling, I have the most wonderful doctor,” Catherine said in a very strange voice. “He’s been telling me the most wonderful story and when the pain came too badly he put me all the way out. He’s wonderful. You’re wonderful, doctor.”

"You're drunk," I said.

"I know it," Catherine said. "But you shouldn't say it." Then *"Give it to me. Give it to me."* She clutched hold of the mask and breathed short and deep, pan tingly, making the respirator click. Then she gave a long sigh and the doctor reached with his left hand and lifted away the mask.

"That was a very big one," Catherine said. Her voice was very strange. "I'm not going to die now, darling. I'm past where I was going to die. Aren't you glad?"

"Don't you get in that place again."

"I won't. I'm not afraid of it though. I won't die, darling."

"You will not do any such foolishness," the doctor said. "You would not die and leave your husband."

"Oh, no. I won't die. I wouldn't die. It's silly to die. There it comes. *Give it to me."*

After a while the doctor said, "You will go out, Mr. Henry, for a few moments and I will make an examination."

"He wants to see how I am doing," Catherine said. "You can come back afterward, darling, can't he, doctor?"

"Yes," said the doctor. "I will send word when he can come back."

I went out the door and down the hall to the room where Catherine was to be after the baby came. I sat in a chair there and looked at the room. I had the paper in my coat that I had bought when I went out for lunch and I read it. It was beginning to be dark outside and I turned the light on to read. After a while I stopped reading and turned off the light and watched it get dark outside. I wondered why the doctor did not send for me. Maybe it was better I was away. He probably wanted me away for a while. I looked at my watch. If he did not send for me in ten minutes I would go down anyway.

Poor, poor dear Cat. And this was the price you paid for sleeping together. This was the end of the trap. This was what people got for

loving each other. Thank God for gas, anyway. What must it have been like before there were anesthetics? Once it started, they were in the mill-race. Catherine had a good time in the time of pregnancy. It wasn't bad. She was hardly ever sick. She was not awfully uncomfortable until toward the last. So now they got her in the end. You never got away with anything. Get away hell! It would have been the same if we had been married fifty times. And what if she should die? She won't die. People don't die in child- birth nowadays. That was what all husbands thought. Yes, but *at* if she should die? She won't die. She's just having a bad time The initial labor is usually protracted. She's only having a bad time. Afterward we'd say what a bad time and Catherine would say it wasn't really so bad. But what if she should die? She can't die. Yes, but what if she should die? She can't, I tell you. Don't be a fool. It's just a bad time. It's just nature giving her hell. It's only the first labor, which is almost always protracted. Yes, but what if she should die? She can't die. Why would she die? What reason is there for her to die? There's just a child that has to be born, the by-product of good nights in Milan. It makes trouble and is born and then you look after it and get fond of it maybe. But what if she should die? She won't die. But what if she should die? She won't. She's all right. But what if she should die? She can't die. But what if she should die? Hey, what about that? What if she should die?

The doctor came into the room.

"How does it go, doctor?"

"It doesn't go," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"Just that. I made an examination—" He detailed the result of the examination. "Since then I've waited to see. But it doesn't go."

"What do you advise?"

"There are two things. Either a high forceps delivery which can tear and be quite dangerous besides being possibly bad for the child, and a Cesarean."

"What is the danger of a Cesarean?" What if she should die!

"It should be no greater than the danger of an ordinary delivery."

"Would you do it yourself?"

"Yes. I would need possibly an hour to get things ready and to get the people I would need. Perhaps a little less."

"What do you think?"

"I would advise a Cesarean operation. If it were my wife I would do a Cesarean."

"What are the after effects?"

"There are none. There is only the scar."

"What about infection?"

"The danger is not so great as in a high forceps delivery."

"What if you just went on and did nothing?"

"You would have to do something eventually. Mrs. Henry is already losing much of her strength. The sooner we operate now the safer."

"Operate as soon as you can," I said.

"I will go and give the instructions."

I went into the delivery room. The nurse was with Catherine who lay on the table, big under the sheet, looking very pale and tired.

"Did you tell him he could do it?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Isn't that grand. Now it will be all over in an hour. I'm almost done, darling. I'm going all to pieces. *Please give me that.* It doesn't work. *Oh,* it *doesn't work!"*

"Breathe deeply."

"I am. Oh, it doesn't work anymore. It doesn't work!"

"Get another cylinder," I said to the nurse.

"That is a new cylinder."

"I'm just a fool, darling," Catherine said. "But it doesn't work anymore." She began to cry. "Oh, I wanted so to have this baby and

not make trouble, and now I'm all done and all gone to pieces and it doesn't work. Oh, darling, it doesn't work at all. I don't care if I die if it will only stop. Oh, please, darling, please make it stop. *There it comes. Oh Oh Oh!"* She breathed sobbingly in the mask. "It doesn't work. It doesn't work. It doesn't work. Don't mind me, darling. Please don't cry. Don't mind me. I'm just gone all to pieces. You poor sweet. I love you so and I'll be good again. I'll be good this time. *Can't they give me something?* If they could only give me something."

"I'll make it work. I'll turn it all the way."

"Give it to me now.

I turned the dial all the way and as she breathed hard and deep her hand relaxed on the mask. I shut off the gas and lifted the mask. She came back from a long way away.

"That was lovely, darling. Oh, you're so good to me."

"You be brave, because I can't do that all the time. It might kill you."

"I'm not brave anymore, darling. I'm all broken. They've broken me. I know it now."

"Everybody is that way."

"But it's awful. They just keep it up till they break you."

"In an hour it will be over."

"Isn't that lovely? Darling, I won't die, will I?"

"No. I promise you won't."

"Because I don't want to die and leave you, but I get so tired of it and I feel I'm going to die."

"Nonsense. Everybody feels that."

"Sometimes I know I'm going to die."

"You won't. You can't."

"But what if I should?"

"I won't let you."

"Give it to me quick. *Give it to me!"* Then afterward, "I won't die. I won't let myself die."

"Of course you won't."

"You'll stay with me?"

"Not to watch it."

"No, just to be there."

"Sure. I'll be there all the time."

"You're so good to me. There, give it to me. Give me some more. *It's not working!"*

I turned the dial to three and then four. I wished the doctor would come back. I was afraid of the numbers above two.

Finally a new doctor came in with two nurses and they lifted Catherine onto a wheeled stretcher and we started down the hall. The stretcher went rapidly down the hall and into the elevator where everyone had to crowd against the wall to make room; then up, then an open door and out of the elevator and down the hall on rubber wheels to the operating room. I did not recognize the doctor with his cap and mask on. There was another doctor and more nurses.

"They've got to give me something," Catherine said. *"They've got to give me something.* Oh please, doctor, give me enough to do some good!"

One of the doctors put a mask over her face and I looked through the door and saw the bright small amphitheatre of the operating room.

"You can go in the other door and sit up there," a nurse said to me. There were benches behind a rail that looked down on the white table and the lights. I looked at Catherine. The mask was over her face and she was quiet now. They wheeled the stretcher forward. I turned away and walked down the hall. Two nurses were hurrying toward the entrance to the gallery.

"It's a Cesarean," one said. "They're going to do a Cesarean."

The other one laughed, "We're just in time. Aren't we lucky?" They went in the door that led to the gallery.

Another nurse came along. She was hurrying too.

“You go right in there. Go right in,” she said.

“I’m staying outside.”

She hurried in. I walked up and down the hall. I was afraid to go in. I looked out the window. It was dark but in the light from the window I could see it was raining. I went into a room at the far end of the hall and looked at the labels on bottles in a glass case. Then I came out and stood in the empty hall and watched the door of the operating room.

A doctor came out followed by a nurse. He held something in his two hands that looked like a freshly skinned rabbit and hurried across the corridor with it and in through another door. I went down to the door he had gone into and found them in the room doing things to a new-born child. The doctor held him up for me to see. He held him by the heels and slapped him.

“Is he all right?”

“He’s magnificent. He’ll weigh five kilos.”

I had no feeling for him. He did not seem to have anything to do with me. I felt no feeling of fatherhood.

“Aren’t you proud of your son?” the nurse asked. They were washing him and wrapping him in something. I saw the little dark face and dark hand, but I did not see him move or hear him cry. The doctor was doing something to him again. He looked upset.

“No,” I said. “He nearly killed his mother.”

“It isn’t the little darling’s fault. Didn’t you want a boy?”

“No,” I said. The doctor was busy with him. He held him up by the feet and slapped him. I did not wait to see it. I went out in the hall. I could go in now and see. I went in the door and a little way down the gallery. The nurses who were sitting at the rail motioned for me to come down where they were. I shook my head. I could see enough where I was.

I thought Catherine was dead. She looked dead. Her face was gray, the part of it that I could see. Down below, under the light, the doctor was sewing up the great long, forcep-spread, thick edged,

wound. Another doctor in a mask gave the anesthetic. Two nurses in masks handed things. It looked like a drawing of the Inquisition. I knew as I watched I could have watched it all, but I was glad I hadn't. I do not think I could have watched them cut, but I watched the wound closed into a high welted ridge with quick skilful-looking stitches like a cobbler's, and was glad. When the wound was closed I went out into the hall and walked up and down again. After a while the doctor came out.

"How is she?"

"She is all right. Did you watch?"

He looked tired.

"I saw you sew up. The incision looked very long."

"You thought so?"

"Yes. Will that scar flatten out?"

"Oh, yes."

After a while they brought out the wheeled stretcher and took it very rapidly down the hallway to the elevator. I went along beside it. Catherine was moaning. Downstairs they put her in the bed in her room. I sat in a chair at the foot of the bed. There was a nurse in the room. I got up and stood by the bed. It was dark in the room. Catherine put out her hand. "Hello, darling," she said. Her voice was very weak and tired.

"Hello, you sweet."

"What sort of baby was it?"

"Sh—don't talk," the nurse said.

"A boy. He's long and wide and dark."

"Is he all right?"

"Yes," I said. "He's fine."

I saw the nurse look at me strangely.

"I'm awfully tired," Catherine said. "And I hurt like hell. Are you all right, darling?"

"I'm fine. Don't talk."

"You were lovely to me. Oh, darling, I hurt dreadfully. What

does he look like?"

"He looks like a skinned rabbit with a puckered-up old-man's face."

"You must go out," the nurse said. "Madame Henry must not talk."

"I'll be outside."

"Go and get something to eat."

"No. I'll be outside." I kissed Catherine. She was very gray and weak and tired.

"May I speak to you?" I said to the nurse. She came out in the hall with me. I walked a little way down the hall.

"What's the matter with the baby?" I asked.

"Didn't you know?"

"No."

"He wasn't alive."

"He was dead?"

"They couldn't start him breathing. The cord was caught around his neck or something."

"So he's dead."

"Yes. It's such a shame. He was such a fine big boy. I thought you knew."

"No," I said. "You better go back in with Madame."

I sat down on the chair in front of a table where there were nurses' reports hung on clips at the side and looked out of the window. I could see nothing but the dark and the rain falling across the light from the window. So that was it. The baby was dead. That was why the doctor looked so tired. But why had they acted the way they did in the room with him? They supposed he would come around and start breathing probably. I had no religion but I knew he ought to have been baptized. But what if he never breathed at all. He hadn't. He had never been alive. Except in Catherine. I'd felt him kick there often enough. But I hadn't for a week. Maybe he was choked all the time. Poor little kid. I wished the hell I'd been

choked like that. No I didn't. Still there would not be all this dying to go through. Now Catherine would die. That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you. Or they killed you gratuitously like Aymo. Or gave you the syphilis like Rinaldi. But they killed you in the end. You could count on that. Stay around and they would kill you.

Once in camp I put a log on top of the fire and it was full of ants. As it commenced to burn, the ants swarmed out and went first toward the centre where the fire was; then turned back and ran toward the end. When there were enough on the end they fell off into the fire. Some got out, their bodies burnt and flattened, and went off not knowing where they were going. But most of the went toward the fire and then back toward the end and swarmed on the cool end and finally fell off into the fire. I remember thinking at the time that it was the end of the world and a splendid chance to be a messiah and lift the log off the fire and throw it out where the ants could get off onto the ground. But I did not do anything but throw a tin cup of water on the log, so that I would have the cup empty to put whiskey in before J added water to it. I think the cup of water on the burning log only steamed the ants.

So now I sat out in the hall and waited to hear how Catherine was. The nurse did not come out, so after a while I went to the door and opened it very softly and looked in. I could not see at first because there was a bright light in the hall and it was dark in the room. Then I saw the nurse sitting by the bed and Catherine's head on a pillow, and she was all flat under the sheet. The nurse put her finger to her lips, then stood up and came to the door.

"How is she?" I asked.

"She's all right," the nurse said. ''You should go and have your supper and then come back if you wish."

I went down the hall and then down the stairs and out the door

of the hospital and down the dark street in the rain to the café . It was brightly lighted inside and there were many people at the tables. I did not see a place to sit, and a waiter came up to me and took my wet coat and hat and showed me a place at a table across from an elderly man who was drinking beer and reading the evening paper. I sat down and asked the waiter what the *plat du jour* was.

"Veal stew1but it is finished."

"What can I have to eat?"

"Ham and eggs, eggs with cheese, or *choucroute."*

"I had *choucroute* this noon," I said.

"That's true," he said. "That's true. You ate *choucroute* this noon." He was a middle-aged man with a bald top to his head and his hair slicked over it. He had a kind face.

"What do you want? Ham and eggs or eggs with cheese?"

"Ham and eggs," I said, "and beer."

"A demi-blonde?"

"Yes," I said.

"I remembered," he said. "You took a demi-blonde this noon."

I ate the ham and eggs and drank the beer. The ham and eggs were in a round dish—the ham underneath and the eggs on top. It was very hot and at the first mouthful I had to take a drink of beer to cool my mouth. I was hungry and I asked the waiter for another order. I drank several glasses of beer. I was not thinking at all but read the paper of the man opposite me. It was about the break through on the British front. When he realized I was reading the back of his paper he folded it over. I thought of asking the waiter for a paper, but I could not concentrate. It was hot in the café and the air was bad. Many of the people at the tables knew one another. There were several card games going on. The waiters were busy bringing drinks from the bar to the tables. Two men came in and could find no place to sit. They stood opposite the table where I was. I ordered another beer. I was not ready to leave yet. It was too

soon to go back to the hospital. I tried not to think and to be perfectly calm. The men stood around but no one was leaving, so they went out. I drank another beer. There was quite a pile of saucers now on the table in front of me. The man opposite me had taken off his spectacles, put them away in a case, folded his paper and put it in his pocket and now sat holding his liqueur glass and looking out at the room. Suddenly I knew I had to get back. I called the waiter, paid the reckoning, got into my coat, put on my hat and started out the door. I walked through the rain up to the hospital.

Upstairs I met the nurse coming down the hall.

"I just called you at the hotel," she said. Something dropped inside me.

"What is wrong?"

"Mrs. Henry has had a hemorrhage."

"Can I go in?"

"No, not yet. The doctor is with her."

"Is it dangerous?"

"It is very dangerous." The nurse went into the room and shut the door. I sat outside in the hall. Everything was gone inside of me. I did not think. I could not think. I knew she was going to die and I prayed that she would not. Don't let her die. Oh, God, please don't let her die. I'll do anything for you if you won't let her die. Please, please, dear God, don't let her die. Dear God, don't let her die. Please, please, please don't let her die. God please make her not die. I'll do anything you say if you don't let her die. You took the baby but don't let her die. That was all right but don't let her die. Please, please, dear God, don't let her die.

The nurse opened the door and motioned with her finger for me to come. I followed her into the room. Catherine did not look up when I came in. I went over to the side of the bed. The doctor was standing by the bed on the opposite side. Catherine looked at me and smiled. I bent down over the bed and started to cry.

"Poor darling," Catherine said very softly. She looked gray.

“You’re all right, Cat,” I said. “You’re going to be all right.”

“I’m going to die,” she said; then waited and said, “I hate it.” I took her hand.

“Don’t touch me,” she said. I let go of her hand. She smiled.

“Poor darling. You touch me all you want.”

“You’ll be all right, Cat. I know you’ll be all right.”

“I meant to write you a letter to have if anything happened, but I didn’t do it.”

“Do you want me to get a priest or anyone to come and see you?”

“Just you,” she said. Then a little later, “I’m not afraid. I just hate it.”

“You must not talk so much,” the doctor said.

“All right,” Catherine said.

“Do you want me to do anything, Cat? Can I get you anything?” Catherine smiled, “No.” Then a little later, “You won’t do our things with another girl, or say the same things, will you?”

“Never.”

“I want you to have girls, though.”

“I don’t want them.”

“You are talking too much,” the doctor said. “Mr. Henry must go out. He can come back again later. You are not going to die. You must not be silly.”

“All right,” Catherine said. “I’ll come and stay with you nights,” she said. It was very hard for her to talk.

“Please go out of the room,” the doctor said. “You cannot talk.” Catherine winked at me, her face gray. “I’ll be right outside,” I said.

“Don’t worry, darling,” Catherine said. “I’m not a bit afraid. It’s just a dirty trick.”

“You dear, brave sweet.”

I waited outside in the hall. I waited’ a long time. The nurse came to the door and came over to me. “I’m afraid Mrs. Henry is very ill,” she said. “I’m afraid for her.”

“Is she dead?”

“No, but she is unconscious.”

It seems she had one hemorrhage after another. They couldn’t stop it. I went into the room and stayed with Catherine until she died. She was unconscious all the time, and it did not take her very long to die.

Outside the room, in the hall, I spoke to the doctor, “Is there anything I can do tonight?”

“No. There is nothing to do. Can I take you to your hotel?”

“No, thank you. I am going to stay here a while.”

“I know there is nothing to say. I cannot tell you—”

“No,” I said. “There’s nothing to say.”

“Goodnight,” he said. “I cannot take you to your hotel?”

“No, thank you.”

“It was the only thing to do,” he said. “The operation proved—”

“I do not want to talk about it,” I said.

“I would like to take you to your hotel.”

“No, thank you.”

He went down the hall. I went to the door of the room.

“You can’t come in now,” one of the nurses said.

“Yes I can,” I said.

“You can’t come in yet.”

“You get out,” I said. “The other one too.”

But after I had got them out and shut the door and turned off the light it wasn’t any good. It was like saying goodbye to a statue. After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain.

THE END

ERNEST

HEMINGWAY

TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

To Have and Have Not

Ernest Hemingway

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

CONTENTS

Author's Note

PART ONE: Harry Morgan (Spring)

Chapter One
Chapter Two
Chapter Three
Chapter Four
Chapter Five

PART TWO: Harry Morgan (Fall)

Chapter Six
Chapter Seven
Chapter Eight

PART THREE: Harry Morgan (Winter)

Chapter Nine
Chapter Ten
Chapter Eleven
Chapter Twelve
Chapter Thirteen
Chapter Fourteen
Chapter Fifteen
Chapter Sixteen
Chapter Seventeen
Chapter Eighteen
Chapter Nineteen
Chapter Twenty
Chapter Twenty-One
Chapter Twenty-Two
Chapter Twenty-Three
Chapter Twenty-Four
Chapter Twenty-Five
Chapter Twenty-Six

In view of a recent tendency to identify characters in fiction with real people, it seems proper to state that there are no real people in this volume: both the characters and their names are fictitious. If the name of any living person has been used, the use was purely accidental.

{PART ONE}

Harry Morgan (Spring)

Chapter One

You know how it is there early in the morning in Havana with the bums still asleep against the walls of the buildings; before even the ice wagons come by with ice for the bars? Well, we came across the square from the dock to the Pearl of San Francisco Café to get coffee and there was only one beggar awake in the square and he was getting a drink out of the fountain. But when we got inside the café and sat down, there were the three of them waiting for us.

We sat down and one of them came over. “Well,” he said.

“I can’t do it,” I told him. “I’d like to do it as a favor. But I told you last night I couldn’t.”

“You can name your own price.”

“It isn’t that. I can’t do it. That’s all.”

The two others had come over and they stood there looking sad. They were nice-looking fellows all right and I would have liked to have done them the favor.

“A thousand apiece,” said the one who spoke good English.

“Don’t make me feel bad,” I told him. “I tell you true I can’t do it.”

“Afterwards, when things are changed, it would mean a good deal to you.”

“I know it. I’m all for you. But I can’t do it.”

“Why not?”

“I make my living with the boat. If I lose her I lose my living.”

“With the money you buy another boat.”

“Not in jail.”

They must have thought I just needed to be argued into it

because the one kept on.

"You would have three thousand dollars and it could mean a great deal to you later. All this will not last, you know."

"Listen," I said. "I don't care who is President here. But I don't carry anything to the States that can talk."

"You mean we would talk?" one of them who hadn't spoke said. He was angry.

"I said anything that can talk."

"Do you think we are lenguas largas?"

"No."

"Do you know what a lengua larga is?"

"Yes. One with a long tongue."

"Do you know what we do with them?"

"Don't be tough with me," I said. "You propositioned me. I didn't offer you anything."

"Shut up, Pancho," the one who had done the talking before said to the angry one.

"He said we would talk," Pancho said.

"Listen," I said. "I told you I didn't carry anything that can talk. Sacked liquor can't talk. Demijohns can't talk. There's other things that can't talk. Men can talk."

"Can Chinamen talk?" Pancho said, pretty nasty.

"They can talk but I can't understand them," I told him.

"So you won't?"

"It's just like I told you last night. I can't."

"But you won't talk?" Pancho said.

The one thing that he hadn't understood right had made him nasty. I guess it was disappointment, too. I didn't even answer him.

"You're not a lengua larga, are you?" he asked, still nasty.

"I don't think so."

"What's that? A threat?"

"Listen," I told him. "Don't be so tough so early in the morning. I'm sure you've cut plenty people's throats. I haven't even had my

coffee yet."

"So you're sure I've cut people's throats?"

"No," I said. "And I don't give a damn. Can't you do business without getting angry?"

"I am angry now," he said. "I would like to kill you."

"Oh, hell," I told him. "Don't talk so much."

"Come on, Pancho," the first one said. Then, to me, "I am very sorry. I wish you would take us."

"I'm sorry, too. But I can't."

The three of them started for the door, and I watched them go. They were good-looking young fellows, wore good clothes; none of them wore hats, and they looked like they had plenty of money. They talked plenty of money, anyway, and they spoke the kind of English Cubans with money speak.

Two of them looked like brothers and the other one, Pancho, was a little taller but the same sort of looking kid. You know, slim, good clothes, and shiny hair. I didn't figure he was as mean as he talked. I figured he was plenty nervous.

As they turned out of the door to the right, I saw a closed car come across the square toward them. The first thing a pane of glass went and the bullet smashed into the row of bottles on the showcase wall to the right. I heard the gun going and, bop, bop, bop, there were bottles smashing all along the wall.

I jumped behind the bar on the left side and could see looking over the edge. The car was stopped and there were two fellows crouched down by it. One had a Thompson gun and the other had a sawed-off automatic shotgun. The one with the Thompson gun was a nigger. The other had a chauffeur's white duster on.

One of the boys was spread out on the sidewalk, face down, just outside the big window that was smashed. The other two were behind one of the Tropical beer ice wagons that was stopped in front of the Cunard bar next door. One of the ice-wagon horses was down in the harness, kicking, and the other was plunging his head

off.

One of the boys shot from the rear corner of the wagon and it ricocheted off the sidewalk. The nigger with the Tommy gun got his face almost into the street and gave the back of the wagon a burst from underneath and sure enough one came down, falling toward the sidewalk with his head above the curb. He flopped there, putting his hands over his head, and the chauffeur shot at him with the shotgun while the nigger put in a fresh pan; but it was a long shot. You could see the buckshot marks all over the sidewalk like silver splatters. The other fellow pulled the one who was hit back by the legs to behind the wagon, and I saw the nigger getting his face down on the paving to give them another burst. Then I saw old Pancho come around the corner of the wagon and step into the lee of the horse that was still up. He stepped clear of the horse, his face white as a dirty sheet, and got the chauffeur with the big Luger he had; holding it in both hands to keep it steady. He shot twice over the nigger's head, coming on, and once low.

He hit a tire on the car because I saw dust blowing in a spurt on the street as the air came out, and at ten feet the nigger shot him in the belly with the Tommy gun, with what must have been the last shot in it because I saw him throw it down, and old Pancho sat down hard and went over forwards. He was trying to come up, still holding onto the Luger, only he couldn't get his head up, when the nigger took the shotgun that was lying against the wheel of the car by the chauffeur and blew the side of his head off. Some nigger.

I took a quick one out of the first bottle I saw open and I couldn't tell you yet what it was. The whole thing made me feel pretty bad. I slipped along behind the bar and out through the kitchen in back and all the way out. I went clean around the outside of the square and never even looked over toward the crowd there was coming fast in front of the café and went in through the gate and out onto the dock and got on board.

The fellow who had her chartered was on board waiting. I told

him what had happened.

"Where's Eddy?" this fellow Johnson that had us chartered asked me.

"I never saw him after the shooting started."

"Do you suppose he was hit?"

"Hell, no. I tell you the only shots that came in the café were into the show case. That was when the car was coming behind them. That was when they shot the first fellow right in front of the window. They came at an angle like this—"

"You seem awfully sure about it," he said.

"I was watching," I told him.

Then, as I looked up, I saw Eddy coming along the dock looking taller and sloppier than ever. He walked with his joints all slung wrong.

"There he is."

Eddy looked pretty bad. He never looked too good early in the morning; but he looked pretty bad now.

"Where were you?" I asked him.

"On the floor."

"Did you see it?" Johnson asked him.

"Don't talk about it, Mr. Johnson," Eddy said to him. "It makes me sick to even think about it."

"You better have a drink," Johnson told him. Then he said to me, "Well, are we going out?"

"That's up to you."

"What sort of a day will it be?"

"Just about like yesterday. Maybe better."

"Let's get out, then."

"All right, as soon as the bait comes."

We'd had this bird out three weeks fishing the stream and I hadn't seen any of his money yet except one hundred dollars he gave me to pay the consul, and clear, and get some grub, and put gas in her before we came across. I was furnishing all the tackle and

he had her chartered at thirty-five dollars a day. He slept at a hotel and came aboard every morning. Eddy got me the charter so I had to carry him. I was giving him four dollars a day.

"I've got to put gas in her," I told Johnson.

"All right."

"I'll need some money for that."

"How much?"

"It's twenty-eight cents a gallon. I ought to put in forty gallons anyway. That's eleven-twenty."

He got out fifteen dollars.

"Do you want to put the rest on the beer and the ice?" I asked him.

"That's fine," he said. "Just put it down against what I owe you."

I was thinking three weeks was a long time to let him go, but if he was good for it what difference was there? He should have paid every week anyway. But I've let them run a month and got the money. It was my fault but I was glad to see it run at first. It was only the last few days he made me .nervous but I didn't want to say anything for fear of getting him plugged at me. If he was good for it, the longer he went the better.

"Have a bottle of beer?" he asked me, opening the box.

"No, thanks."

Just then this nigger we had getting bait comes down the dock and I told Eddy to get ready to cast her off.

The nigger came on board with the bait and we cast off and started out of the harbor, the nigger fixing on a couple of mackerel; passing the hook through their mouth, out the gills, slitting the side and then putting the hook through the other side and out, tying the mouth shut on the wire leader and tying the hook good so it couldn't slip and so the bait would troll smooth without spinning.

He's a real black nigger, smart and gloomy, with blue voodoo beads around his neck under his shirt, and an old straw hat. What

he liked to do on board was sleep and read the papers. But he put on a nice bait and he was fast.

"Can't you put on a bait like that, captain?" Johnson asked me.

"Yes, sir."

"Why do you carry a nigger to do it?"

"When the big fish run you'll see," I told him.

"What's the idea?"

"The nigger can do it faster than I can."

"Can't Eddy do it?"

"No, sir."

"It seems an unnecessary expense to me." He'd been giving the nigger a dollar a day and the nigger had been on a rumba every night. I could see him getting sleepy already.

"He's necessary," I said.

By then we had passed the smacks with their fish cars anchored in front of Cabañas and the skiffs anchored fishing for mutton fish on the rock bottom by the Morro, and I headed her out where the gulf made a dark line. Eddy put the two big teasers out and the nigger had baits on three rods.

The stream was in almost to soundings and as we came toward the edge you could see her running nearly purple with regular whirlpools. There was a light east breeze coming up and we put up plenty of flying fish, those big ones with the black wings that look like the picture of Lindbergh crossing the Atlantic when they sail off.

Those big flying fish are the best sign there is. As far as you could see, there was that faded yellow gulf- weed in small patches that means the main stream is well in and there were birds ahead working over a school of little tuna. You could see them jumping; just little ones weighing a couple of pounds apiece.

"Put out any time you want," I told Johnson.

He put on his belt and his harness and put out the big rod with the Hardy reel with six hundred yards of thirty-six thread. I looked

back and his bait was trolling nice, just bouncing along on the swell, and the two teasers were diving and jumping. We were going just about the right speed and I headed her into the stream.

"Keep the rod butt in the socket on the chair," I told him. "Then the rod won't be as heavy. Keep the drag off so you can slack to him when he hits. If one ever hits with the drag on he'll jerk you overboard."

Every day I'd have to tell him the same thing but I didn't mind that. One out of fifty parties you get know how to fish. Then when they do know, half the time they're goofy and want to use line that isn't strong enough to hold anything big.

"How does the day look?" he asked me.

"It couldn't be better," I told him. It was a pretty day all right.

I gave the nigger the wheel and told him to work along the edge of the stream to the eastward and went back to where Johnson was sitting watching his bait bouncing along.

"Want me to put out another rod?" I asked him.

"I don't think so," he said. "I want to hook, fight, and land my fish myself.

"Good," I said. "Do you want Eddy to put it out and hand it to you if one strikes so you can hook him?"

"No," he said. "I prefer to have only one rod out."

"All right."

The nigger was still taking her out and I looked and saw he had seen a patch of flying fish burst out ahead and up the stream a little. Looking back, I could see Havana looking fine in the sun and a ship just coming out of the harbor past the Morro.

"I think you're going to have a chance to fight one today. Mr. Johnson," I told him.

"It's about time," he said. "How long have we been out?"

"Three weeks today." "That's a long time to fish."

"They're a funny fish," I told him. "They aren't here until they come. But when they come there's plenty of them. And they've

always come. If they don't come now they're never coming. The moon is right. There's a good stream and we're going to have a good breeze."

"There were some small ones when we first came."

"Yes," I said. "Like I told you. The small ones thin out and stop before the big ones come."

"You party boat captains always have the same line. Either it's too early or too late or the wind isn't right or the moon is wrong. But you take the money just the same."

"Well," I told him, "the hell of it is that it usually is too early or too late and plenty of time the wind is wrong. Then when you get a day that's perfect you're ashore without a party."

"But you think today's a good day?"

"Well," I told him, "I've had action enough for me already today. But I'd like to bet you're going to have plenty."

"I hope so," he said.

We settled down to troll. Eddy went forward and laid down. I was standing up watching for a tail to show. Every once in a while the nigger would doze off and I was watching him, too. I bet he had some nights.

"Would you mind getting me a bottle of beer, captain?" Johnson asked me.

"No, sir," I said, and I dug down in the ice to get him a cold one.

"Won't you have one?" he asked.

"No, sir," I said. "I'll wait till tonight."

I opened the bottle and was reaching it toward him when I saw this big brown buggar with a spear on him longer than your arm burst head and shoulders out of the water and smash at that mackerel. He looked as big around as a saw log.

"Slack it to him!" I yelled.

"He hasn't got it," Johnson said.

"Hold it, then."

He'd come up from deep down and missed it. I knew he'd turn

and come for it again.

"Get ready to turn it loose to him the minute he grabs it."

Then I saw him coming from behind under water. You could see his fins out wide like purple wings and the purple stripes across the brown. He came on like a submarine and his top fin came out and you could see it slice the water. Then he came right behind the bait and his spear came out too, sort of wagging, clean out of water.

"Let it go into his mouth," I said. Johnson took his hand off the reel spool and it started to whiz and the old marlin turned and went down and I could see the whole length of him shine bright silver as he turned broadside and headed off fast toward shore.

"Put on a little drag," I said. "Not much."

He screwed down on the drag.

"Not too much," I said. I could see the line slant up. "Shut her down hard and sock him," I said. "You've got to sock him. He's going to jump anyway."

Johnson screwed the drag down and came back on the rod.

"Sock him!" I told him. "Stick it into him. Hit him half a dozen times."

He hit him pretty hard a couple of times more, and then the rod bent double and the reel commenced to screech and out he came, boom, in a long straight jump, shining silver in the sun and making a splash like throwing a horse off a cliff.

"Ease up on the drag," I told him.

"He's gone," said Johnson.

"The hell he is." I told him. "Ease up on the drag quick."

I could see the curve in the line and the next time he jumped he was astern and headed out to sea. Then he came out again and smashed the water white and I could see he was hooked in the side of the mouth. The stripes showed clear on him. He was a fine fish bright silver now, barred with purple, and as big around as a log.

"He's gone," Johnson said. The line was slack.

"Reel on him," I said. "He's hooked good. Put her ahead with all

the machine!" I yelled to the nigger.

Then once, twice, he came out stiff as a post, the whole length of him jumping straight toward us, throwing the water high each time he landed. The line came taut and I saw he was headed inshore again and I could see he was turning.

"Now he'll make his run," I said. "If he hooks up I'll chase him. Keep your drag light. There's plenty of line."

The old marlin headed out to the nor'west like all the big ones go, and brother, did he hook up. He started jumping in those long lopes and every splash would be like a speed boat in a sea. We went after him, keeping him on the quarter once I'd made the turn. I had the wheel and I kept yelling to Johnson to keep his drag light and reel fast. All of a sudden I see his rod jerk and the line go slack. It wouldn't look slack unless you knew about it because of the pull of the belly of the line in the water. But I knew.

"He's gone," I told him. The fish was still jumping and he went on jumping until he was out of sight. He was a fine fish all right.

"I can still feel him pull," Johnson said.

"That's the weight of the line."

"I can hardly reel it. Maybe he's dead."

"Look at him," I said. "He's still jumping." You could see him out a half a mile, still throwing spouts of water.

I felt his drag. He had it screwed down tight. You couldn't pull out any line. It had to break.

"Didn't I tell you to keep your drag light?"

"But he kept taking out line."

"So what?"

"So I tightened it."

"Listen," I told him. "If you don't give them line when they hook up like that they break it. There isn't any line will hold them. When they want it you've got to give it to them. You have to keep a light drag. The market fishermen can't hold them tight when they do that even with a harpoon line. What we have to do is use the boat to

chase them so they don't take it all when they make their run. After they make their run they'll sound and you can tighten up the drag and get it back."

"Then if it hadn't broken I would have caught him?"

"You'd have had a chance."

"He couldn't have kept that up, could he?"

"He can do plenty of other things. It isn't until after he's made his run that the fight starts."

"Well, let's catch one," he said.

"You have to reel that line in first," I told him. We'd hooked that fish and lost him without waking Eddy up. Now old Eddy came back astern.

"What's the matter?" he said.

Eddy was a good man on a boat once, before he got to be a rummy, but he isn't any good now. I looked at him standing there tall and hollow-cheeked with his mouth loose and that white stuff in the corners of his eyes and his hair all faded in the sun. I knew he woke up dead for a drink.

"You'd better drink a bottle of beer," I told him.

He took one out of the box and drank it.

"Well, Mr. Johnson," he said, "I guess I better finish my nap. Much obliged for the beer, sir." Some Eddy. The fish didn't make any difference to him.

Well, we hooked another one around noon and he jumped off. You could see the hook go thirty feet in the air when he threw it.

"What did I do wrong then?" Johnson asked.

"Nothing," I said. "He just threw it."

"Mr. Johnson," said Eddy, who'd waked up to have another bottle of beer—"Mr. Johnson, you're just unlucky. Now maybe you're lucky with women. Mr. Johnson, what do you say we go out tonight?" Then he went back and laid down again.

About four o'clock when we're coming back close in to shore against the stream; it going like a mill race, us with the sun at our

backs; the biggest black marlin I ever saw in my life hit Johnson's bait. We'd put out a feather squid and caught four of those little tuna and the nigger put one on his hook for bait. It trolled pretty heavy but it made a big splash in the wake.

Johnson took the harness off the reel so he could put the rod across his knees because his arms got tired holding it in position all the time. Because his hands got tired holding the spool of the reel against the drag of the big bait, he screwed the drag down when I wasn't looking. I never knew he had it down. I didn't like to see him hold the rod that way but I hated to be crabbing at him all the time. Besides, with the drag off, line would go out so there wasn't any danger. But it was a sloppy way to fish.

I was at the wheel and was working the edge of the stream opposite that old cement factory where it makes deep so close in to shore and where it makes a sort of eddy where there is always lots of bait. Then I saw a splash like a depth bomb and the sword, and eye, and open lower-jaw and huge purple-black head of a black marlin. The whole top fin was up out of water looking as high as a full-rigged ship, and the whole scythe tail was out as he smashed at that tuna. The bill was as big around as a baseball bat and slanted up) and as he grabbed the bait he sliced the ocean wide open. He was solid purple-black and he had an eye as big as a soup bowl. He was huge. I bet he'd go a thousand pounds.

I yelled to Johnson to let him have line but before I could say a word, I saw Johnson rise up in the air off the chair as though he was being derricked, and him holding just for a second onto that rod and the rod bending like a bow, and then the butt caught him in the belly and the whole works went overboard.

He'd screwed the drag tight, and when the fish struck, it lifted Johnson right out of the chair and he couldn't hold it. He'd had the butt under one leg and the rod across his lap. If he'd had the harness on it would have taken him along, too.

I cut out the engine and went back to the stern. He was sitting

there holding onto his belly where the rod butt had hit him.

"I guess that's enough for today," I said.

"What was it?" he said to me.

"Black marlin," I said.

"How did it happen?"

"You figure it out," I said. "The reel cost two hundred and fifty dollars. It costs more now. The rod cost me forty-five. There was a little under six hundred yards of thirty-six thread."

Just then Eddy slaps him on the back. "Mr. Johnson," he says, "you're just unlucky. You know I never saw that happen before in my life."

"Shut up, you rummy," I said to him.

"I tell you, Mr. Johnson," Eddy said, "that's the rarest occurrence I ever saw in my life."

"What would I do if I was hooked to a fish like that?" Johnson said.

"That's what you wanted to fight all by yourself," I told him. I was plenty sore.

"They're too big," Johnson said. "Why, it would just be punishment."

"Listen," I said. "A fish like that would kill you."

"They catch them."

"People who know how to fish catch them. But don't think they don't take punishment."

"I saw a picture of a girl who caught one."

"Sure," I said. "Still fishing. He swallowed the bait and they pulled his stomach out and he came to the top and died. I'm talking about trolling for them when they're hooked in the mouth."

"Well," said Johnson, "they're too big. If it isn't enjoyable, why do it?"

"That's right, Mr. Johnson," Eddy said. "If it isn't enjoyable, why do it? Listen, Mr. Johnson. You hit the nail on the head there. If it isn't enjoyable—why do it?"

I was still shaky from seeing that fish and feeling plenty sick about the tackle and I couldn't listen to them. I told the nigger to head her for the Morro. I didn't say anything to them and there they sat, Eddy in one of the chairs with a bottle of beer and Johnson with another.

"Captain," he said to me after a while, "could you make me a highball?"

I made him one without saying anything, and then I made myself a real one. I was thinking to myself that this Johnson had fished fifteen days, finally he hooks into a fish a fisherman would give a year to tie into, he loses him, he loses my heavy tackle, he makes a fool of himself and he sits there perfectly content, drinking with a rummy.

When we got in to the dock and the nigger was standing there waiting, I said, "What about tomorrow?"

"I don't think so," Johnson said. "I'm about fed up with this kind of fishing."

"You want to pay off the nigger?"

"How much do I owe him?"

"A dollar. You can give him a tip if you want." So Johnson gave the nigger a dollar and two Cuban twenty-cent pieces.

"What's this for?" the nigger asks me, showing the coins.

"A tip," I told him in Spanish. "You're through. He gives you that."

"Don't come tomorrow?"

"No."

The nigger gets his ball of twine he used for tying baits and his dark glasses, puts on his straw hat and goes without saying good-bye. He was a nigger that never thought much of any of us.

"When do you want to settle up, Mr. Johnson?" I asked him.

"I'll go to the bank in the morning," Johnson said. "We can settle up in the afternoon."

"Do you know how many days there are?"

“Fifteen.”

“No. There’s sixteen with today and a day each way makes eighteen. Then there’s the rod and reel and the line from today.”

“The tackle’s your risk.”

“No, sir. Not when you lose it that way.”

“I’ve paid every day for the rent of it. It’s your risk.”

“No, sir,” I said. “If a fish broke it and it wasn’t your fault, that would be something else. You lost that whole outfit by carelessness.”

“The fish pulled it out of my hands.”

“Because you had the drag on and didn’t have the rod in the socket.”

“You have no business to charge for that.”

“If you hired a car and ran it off a cliff, don’t you think you’d have to pay for it?”

“Not if I was in it,” Johnson said.

“That’s pretty good, Mr. Johnson,” Eddy said. “You see it, don’t you, cap? If he was in it he’d be killed. So he wouldn’t have to pay. That’s a good one.”

I didn’t pay any attention to the rummy. “You owe two hundred and ninety-five dollars for that rod and reel and line,” I told Johnson.

“Well, it’s not right,” he said. “But if that’s the way you feel about it why not split the difference?”

“I can’t replace it for under three hundred and sixty. I’m not charging you for the line. A fish like that could get all your line and it not be your fault. If there was anyone here but a rummy they’d tell you how square I’m being with you. I know it seems like a lot of money but it was a lot of money when I bought the tackle, too. You can’t fish fish like that without the best tackle you can buy.”

“Mr. Johnson, he says I’m a rummy. Maybe I am. But I tell you he’s right. He’s right and he’s reasonable,” Eddy told him.

“I don’t want to make any difficulties,” Johnson said finally. “I’ll

pay for it, even though I don't see it. That's eighteen days at thirty-five dollars and two ninety-five extra."

"You gave me a hundred," I told him. "I'll give you a list of what I spent and I'll deduct what grub there is left. What you bought for provisions going over and back."

"That's reasonable," Johnson said.

"Listen, Mr. Johnson," Eddy said. "If you knew the way they usually charge a stranger you'd know it was more than reasonable. Do you know what it is? It's exceptional. The Cap is treating you like you were his own mother."

"I'll go to the bank tomorrow and come down in the afternoon. Then I'll get the boat day after tomorrow."

"You can go back with us and save the boat fare."

"No," he said. "I'll save time with the boat."

"Well," I said. "What about a drink?"

"Fine," said Johnson. "No hard feelings now, are there?"

"No, sir," I told him. So the three of us sat there in the stern and drank a highball together.

The next day I worked around her all morning, changing the oil in her base and one thing and another. At noon I went uptown and ate at a Chink place where you get a good meal for forty cents, and then I bought some things to take home to my wife and our three girls. You know, perfume, a couple of fans and three of those high combs. When I finished I stopped in at Donovan's and had a beer and talked with the old man and then walked back to the San Francisco docks, stopping in at three or four places for a beer on the way. I bought Frankie a couple at the Cunard bar and I came on board feeling pretty good. When I came on board I had just forty cents left. Frankie came on board with me, and while we sat and waited for Johnson I drank a couple of cold ones out of the ice box with Frankie.

Eddy hadn't shown up all night or all day but I knew he would be around sooner or later, as soon as his credit ran out. Donovan

told me he'd been in there the night before a little while with Johnson, and Eddy had been setting them up on credit. We waited and I began to wonder about Johnson not showing up. I'd left word at the dock for them to tell him to go on board and wait for me but they said he hadn't come. Still, I figured he had been out late and probably didn't get up till around noon. The banks were open until three-thirty. We saw the plane go out, and about five-thirty I was all over feeling good and was getting plenty worried.

At six o'clock I sent Frankie up to the hotel to see if Johnson was there. I still thought he might be out on a time or he might be there at the hotel feeling too bad to get up. I kept waiting and waiting until it was late. But I was getting plenty worried because he owed me eight hundred and twenty-five dollars.

Frankie was gone about a little over half an hour. When I saw him coming he was walking fast and shaking his head.

"He went on the plane," he said.

All right. There it was. The consulate was closed. I had forty cents, and, anyhow, the plane was in Miami by now. I couldn't even send a wire. Some Mr. Johnson, all right. It was my fault. I should have known better.

"Well," I said to Frankie, "we might as well have a cold one. Mr. Johnson bought them." There were three bottles of Tropical left.

Frankie felt as bad as I did. I don't know how he could but he seemed to. He just kept slapping me on the back and shaking his head.

So there it was. I was broke. I'd lost five hundred and thirty dollars of the charter, and tackle I couldn't replace for three hundred and fifty more. How some of that gang that hangs around the dock would be pleased at that, I thought. It certainly would make some conchs happy. And the day before I turned down three thousand dollars to land three aliens on the Keys. Anywhere, just to get them out of the country.

All right, what was I going to do now? I couldn't bring in a load

because you have to have money to buy the booze and besides there's no money in it anymore. The town is flooded with it and there's nobody to buy it. But I was damned if I was going home broke and starve a summer in that town. Besides I've got a family. The clearance was paid when we came in. You usually pay the broker in advance and he enters you and clears you. Hell, I didn't even have enough money to put in gas. It was a hell of a note, all right. Some Mr. Johnson.

"I've got to carry something, Frankie," I said. "I've got to make some money."

"I'll see," said Frankie. He hangs around the water front and does odd jobs and is pretty deaf and drinks too much every night. But you never saw a fellow more loyal nor with a better heart. I've known him since I first started to run over there. He used to help me load plenty of times. Then when I quit handling stuff and went party-boating and broke out this sword-fishing in Cuba I used to see him a lot around the dock and around the café. He seems dumb and he usually smiles instead of talking, but that's because he's deaf.

"You carry anything?" Frankie asked.

"Sure," I said. "I can't choose now."

"Anything?"

"Sure."

"I'll see," Frankie said. "Where will you be?"

"I'll be at the Perla," I told him. "I have to eat." You can get a good meal at the Perla for twenty-five cents. Everything on the menu is a dime except soup, and that is a nickel. I walked as far as there with Frankie, and I went in and he went on. Before he went he shook me by the hand and clapped me on the back again.

"Don't worry," he said. "Me Frankie; much politics. Much business. Much drinking. No money. But big friend. Don't worry."

"So long, Frankie," I said. "Don't you worry either, boy."

Chapter Two

I went in the Perla and sat down at a table. They had a new pane of glass in the window that had been shot up and the showcase was all fixed up. There were a lot of gall egos drinking at the bar, and some eating. One table was playing dominoes already. I had black bean soup and a beef stew with boiled potatoes for fifteen cents. A bottle of Hatuey beer brought it up to a quarter. When I spoke to the waiter about the shooting he wouldn't say anything. They were all plenty scared.

I finished the meal and sat back and smoked a cigarette and worried my head off. Then I saw Frankie coming in the door with someone behind him. Yellow stuff, I thought to myself. So it's yellow stuff.

"This is Mr. Sing," Frankie said, and smiled.

He'd been pretty fast all right and he knew it.

"How do you do?" said Mr. Sing.

Mr. Sing was about the smoothest-looking thing I'd ever seen. He was a Chink all right, but he talked like an Englishman and he was dressed in a white suit with a silk shirt and black tie and one of those hundred-and-twenty-five-dollar Panama hats.

"You will have some coffee?" he asked me.

"If you do."

"Thank you," said Mr. Sing. "We are quite alone here?"

"Except for everybody in the café," I told him.

"That is all right," Mr. Sing said. "You have a boat?"

"Thirty-eight feet," I said. "Hundred horse Kermath."

"Ah," said Mr. Sing. "I had imagined it was something bigger."

“It can carry two hundred and sixty-five cases without being loaded.”

“Would you care to charter it to me?”

“On what terms?”

“You need not go. I will provide a captain and a crew.”

“No,” I said. “I go on her wherever she goes.”

“I see,” said Mr. Sing. “Would you mind leaving us?” he said to Frankie. Frankie looked as interested as ever and smiled at him.

“He’s deaf,” I said. “He doesn’t understand much English.”

“I see,” said Mr. Sing. “You speak Spanish. Tell him to rejoin us later.”

I motioned to Frankie with my thumb. He got up and went over to the bar.

“You don’t speak Spanish?” I said.

“Oh, yes,” said Mr. Sing. “Now what are the circumstances that would—that have made you consider . . .”

“I’m broke.”

“I see,” said Mr. Sing. “Does the boat owe any money? Can she be libeled?”

“No.”

“Quite so,” Mr. Sing said. “How many of my unfortunate compatriots could your boat accommodate?”

“You mean carry?”

“That’s it.”

“How far?”

“A day’s voyage.”

“I don’t know,” I said. “She can take a dozen if they didn’t have any baggage.”

“They would not have baggage.”

“Where do you want to carry them?”

“I’d leave that to you,” Mr. Sing said.

“You mean where to land them?”

“You would embark them for the Tortugas where a schooner

would pick them up."

"Listen," I said. "There's a lighthouse at the Tortugas on Loggerhead Key with a radio that works both ways."

"Quite," said Mr. Sing. "It would certainly be very silly to land them there."

"Then what?"

"I said you would embark them for there. That is what their passage calls for."

"Yes," I said.

"You would land them wherever your best judgment dictated."

"Will the schooner come to Tortugas to get them?"

"Of course not," said Mr. Sing. "How silly."

"How much are they worth a head?"

"Fifty dollars," said Mr. Sing.

"No."

"How would seventy-five do?"

"What do you get a head?"

"Oh, that's quite beside the point. You see, there are a great many facets, or you would say angles, to my issuing the tickets. It doesn't stop there."

"Yes," I said. "And what I'm supposed to do doesn't have to be paid for, either. Eh?"

"I see your point absolutely," said Mr. Sing. "Should we say a hundred dollars apiece?"

"Listen," I said. "Do you know how long I would go to jail if they pick me up on this?"

"Ten years," said Mr. Sing. "Ten years at least. But there is no reason to go to jail, my dear captain. You run only one risk—when you load your passengers. Everything else is left to your discretion."

"And if they come back on your hands?"

"That's quite simple. I would accuse you to them of having betrayed me. I will make a partial refund and ship them out again. They realize, of course, that it is a difficult voyage."

“What about me?”

“I suppose I should send some word to the consulate.”

“I see.”

“Twelve hundred dollars, captain, is not to be despised at present.”

“When would I get the money?”

“Two hundred when you agree and a thousand when you load.”

“Suppose I went off with the two hundred?”

“I could do nothing, of course,” he smiled. “But I know you wouldn’t do such a thing, captain.”

“Have you got the two hundred with you?”

“Of course.”

“Put it under the plate.” He did.

“All right,” I said. “I’ll clear in the morning and pullout at dark. Now, where do we load?”

“How would Bacuranao be?”

“All right. Have you got it fixed?”

“Of course.”

“Now, about the loading,” I said. “You show two lights, one above the other, at the point. I’ll come in when I see them. You come out in a boat and load from the boat. You come yourself and you bring the money. I won’t take one on board until I have it.”

“No,” he said; “one-half when you start to load and the other when you are finished.”

“All right,” I said. “That’s reasonable.”

“So everything is understood?”

“I guess so,” I said. “There’s no baggage and no arms. No guns, knives, or razors; nothing. I have to know about that.”

“Captain,” said Mr. Sing, “have you no trust in me? Don’t you see our interests are identical?”

“You’ll make sure?”

“Please do not embarrass me,” he said. “Do you not see how our interests coincide?”

“All right,” I told him. “What time will you be there?”

“Before midnight.”

“All right,” I said. “I guess that’s all.”

“How do you want the money?”

“In hundreds is all right.”

He stood up and I watched him go out. Frankie smiled at him as he went. Mr. Sing didn’t look at him. He was a smooth-looking Chink all right. Some Chink.

Frankie came over to the table. “Well?” he said.

“Where did you know Mr. Sing?”

“He ships Chinamen,” Frankie said. “Big business.”

“How long you know him?”

“He’s here about two years,” Frankie said. “Another one ship them before him. Somebody kill him.”

“Somebody will kill Mr. Sing, too.”

“Sure,” said Frankie. “Why not? Plenty big business.”

“Some business,” I said.

“Big business,” said Frankie. “Ship Chinamen never come back. Other Chinamen write letters say everything fine.”

“Wonderful,” I said.

“This kind of Chinamen no understand write. Chinamen can write all rich. Eat nothing. Live on rice. Hundred thousand Chinamen here. Only three Chinese women.”

“Why?”

“Government no let.”

“Hell of a situation,” I said.

“You do business him?”

“Maybe.”

“Good business,” said Frankie. “Better than politics. Much money. Plenty big business.”

“Have a bottle of beer,” I told him.

“You not worry anymore? “

“Hell no,” I said. “Plenty big business. Much obliged.”

“Good,” said Frankie and patted me on the back. “Make me happier than nothing. All I want is you happy. Chinamen good business, eh?”

“Wonderful.”

“Make me happy,” said Frankie. I saw he was about ready to cry because he was so pleased everything was all right, so I patted him on the back. Some Frankie.

First thing in the morning I got hold of the broker and told him to clear us. He wanted the crew list and I told him nobody.

“You’re going to cross alone, Captain?”

“That’s right.”

“What’s become of your mate?”

“He’s on a drunk,” I told him.

“It’s very dangerous to go alone.”

“It’s only ninety miles,” I said. “Do you think having a rummy on board makes any difference?”

I ran her over to the Standard Oil dock across the harbor and filled up both the tanks. She held nearly two hundred gallons when I had her full. I hated to buy it at twenty-eight cents a gallon but I didn’t know where we might go.

Ever since I’d seen the Chink and taken the money I’d been worrying about the business. I don’t think I slept all night. I brought her back to the San Francisco dock, and there was Eddy waiting on the dock for me.

“Hello, Harry,” he said to me and waved. I threw him the stern line and he made her fast, and then came aboard; longer, blearier, drunker than ever. I didn’t say anything to him.

“What do you think about that fellow Johnson going off like that, Harry?” he asked me. “What do you know about that?”

“Get out of here,” I told him. “You’re poison to me.”

“Brother, don’t I feel as bad about it as you do?”

“Get off of her,” I told him.

He just settled back in the chair and stretched his legs out. “I

hear we're going across today," he said. "Well, I guess there isn't any use to stay around."

"You're not going."

"What's the matter, Harry? There's no sense to get plugged with me."

"No? Get off her."

"Oh, take it easy."

I hit him in the face and he stood up and then climbed up onto the dock.

"I wouldn't do a thing like that to you, Harry," he said.

"You're goddamn right you wouldn't," I told him.

"I'm not going to carry you. That's all."

"Well, what did you have to hit me for?"

"So you'd believe it."

"What do you want me to do? Stay here and starve?"

"Starve, hell," I said. "You can get back on the ferry. You can work your way back."

"You aren't treating me square," he said.

"Who did you ever treat square, you rummy?" I told him. "You'd double-cross your own mother."

That was true, too. But I felt bad about hitting him. You know how you feel when you hit a drunk. But I wouldn't carry him the way things were now; not even if I wanted to.

He started to walk off down the dock looking longer than a day without breakfast. Then he turned and came back.

"How's to let me take a couple of dollars, Harry?"

I gave him a five-dollar bill of the Chink's.

"I always knew you were my pal. Harry, why don't you carry me?"

"You're bad luck."

"You're just plugged," he said. "Never mind, old pal. You'll be glad to see me yet."

Now he had money he went off a good deal faster but I tell you

it was poison to see him walk, even. He walked just like his joints were backwards.

I went up to the Perla and met the broker and he gave me the papers and I bought him a drink. Then I had lunch and Frankie came in.

"Fellow gave me this for you," he said and handed me a rolled-up sort of tube wrapped in paper and tied with a piece of red string. It looked like a photograph when I unwrapped it and I unrolled it thinking it was maybe a picture someone around the dock had taken of the boat.

All right. It was a close-up picture of the head and chest of a dead nigger with his throat cut clear across from ear to ear and then stitched up neat and a card on his chest saying in Spanish: "This is what we do to Lenguas largas."

"Who gave it to you?" I asked Frankie.

He pointed out a Spanish boy that works around the docks who is just about gone with the con. This kid was standing at the lunch counter.

"Ask him to come over."

The kid came over. He said two young fellows gave it to him about eleven o'clock. They asked him if he knew me and he said, Yes. Then he gave it to Frankie for me. They gave him a dollar to see that I got it. They were well dressed, he said.

"Politics," Frankie said.

"Oh, yes," I said.

"They think you told the police you were meeting those boys here that morning."

"Oh, yes."

"Bad politics," Frankie said. "Good thing you go."

"Did they leave any message?" I asked the Spanish boy.

"No," he said. "Just to give you that."

"I'm going to leave now," I said to Frankie.

"Bad politics," Frankie said. "Very bad politics."

I had all the papers in a bunch that the broker had given me and I paid the bill and walked out of that café and across the square and through the gate and I was plenty glad to come through the warehouse and get out on the dock. Those kids had me spooked all right. They were just dumb enough to think I'd tipped somebody off about that other lot. Those kids were like Pancho. When they were scared they got excited, and when they got excited they wanted to kill somebody.

I got on board and warmed up the engine. Frankie stood on the dock watching. He was smiling that funny deaf smile. I went back to him.

"Listen," I said. "Don't you get in any trouble about this."

He couldn't hear me. I had to yell it at him.

"Me good politics," Frankie said. He cast her off.

Chapter Three

I waved to Frankie, who'd thrown the bowline on board, and I headed her out of the slip and dropped down the channel with her. A British freighter was going out and I ran along beside her and passed her. She was loaded deep with sugar and her plates were rusty. A limey in an old blue sweater looked down at me from her stern as I went by her. I went out the harbor and past the Morro and put her on the course for Key West; due north. I left the wheel and went forward and coiled up the bowline and then came back and held her on her course, spreading Havana out astern, and then dropping it off behind us as we brought the mountains up.

I dropped the Morro out of sight after a while and then the National Hotel and finally I could just see the dome of the Capitol. There wasn't much current compared to the last day we had fished and there was only a light breeze. I saw a couple of smacks headed in toward Havana and they were coming from the westward, so I knew the current was light.

I cut the switch and killed the motor. There wasn't any sense in wasting gas. I'd let her drift. When it got dark I could always pick up the light of the Morro or, if she drifted up too far, the lights of Cojimar, and steer in and run along to Bacuranao. I figured the way the current looked she would drift the twelve miles up to Bacuranao by dark and I'd see the lights of Baracoa.

Well, I killed the engine and climbed up forward to have a look around. All there was to-see was the two smacks off to the westward headed in, and way back the dome of the Capitol standing up white out of the edge of the sea. There was some

gulfweed on the stream and a few birds working, but not many. I sat up there awhile on top of the house and watched, but the only fish I saw were those little brown ones that use around the gulfweed. Brother, don't let anybody tell you there isn't plenty of water between Havana and Key West. I was just on the edge of it.

After a while I went down into the cockpit again, and there was Eddy.

"What's the matter? What's the matter with the engine?"

"She broke down."

"Why haven't you got the hatch up?" "Oh, hell!" I said.

Do you know what he'd done? He'd come back again and slipped the forward hatch and gone down into the cabin and gone to sleep. He had two quarts with him. He'd gone into the first bodega he'd seen and bought it and come aboard. When I started out he woke up and went back to sleep again. When I stopped her out in the gulf and she began to roll a little with the swell it woke him up.

"I knew you'd carry me, Harry," he said.

"Carry you to hell," I said. "You aren't even on the crew list. I've got a good mind to make you jump overboard now."

"You're an old joker, Harry," he said. "Us conchs ought to stick together when we're in trouble."

"You," I said, "with your mouth. Who's going to trust your mouth when you're hot?"

"I'm a good man, Harry. You put me to the test and see what a good man I am."

"Get me the two quarts," I told him. I was thinking of something else.

He brought them out and I took a drink from the open one and put them forward by the wheel. He stood there and I looked at him. I was sorry for him and for what I knew I'd have to do. Hell, I knew him when he was a good man.

"What's the matter with her, Harry?"

"She's all right."

"What's the matter, then? What are you looking at me like that for?"

"Brother," I told him, and I was sorry for him, "you're in plenty of trouble."

"What do you mean, Harry?"

"I don't know yet," I said. "I haven't got it all figured out yet."

We sat there awhile and I didn't feel like talking to him anymore. Once I knew it, it was hard to talk to him. Then I went below and got out the pump- gun and the Winchester 30–30 that I always had below in the cabin and hung them up in their cases from the top of the house where we hung the rods usually, right over the wheel where I could reach them. I keep them in those full-length, clipped sheep's wool cases with the wool inside soaked in oil. That's the only way you can keep them from rusting on a boat.

I loosened up the pump and worked her a few times, and then filled her up and pumped one into the barrel. I put a shell in the chamber of the Winchester and filled up the magazine. I got out the Smith and Wesson thirty-eight special I had when I was on the police force up in Miami from under the mattress and cleaned and oiled it and filled it up and put it on my belt.

"What's the matter?" Eddy said. "What the hell's the matter?"

"Nothing," I told him.

"What's all the damn guns for?"

"I always carry them on board," I said. "To shoot birds that bother the baits or to shoot sharks, or for cruising along the keys."

"What's the matter, damn it?" said Eddy. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing," I told him. I sat there with the old thirty-eight flopping against my leg when she rolled, and I looked at him. I thought, there's no sense to do it now. I'm going to need him now.

"We're going to do a little job," I said. "In at Bacuranao. I'll tell you what to do when it's time."

I didn't want to tell him too far ahead because he would get to

worrying and get so spooked he wouldn't be any use.

"You couldn't have anybody better than me, Harry," he said. "I'm the man for you. I'm with you on anything."

I looked at him, tall and bleary and shaky, and I didn't say anything.

"Listen, Harry. Would you give me just one?" he asked me. "I don't want to get the shakes."

I gave him one and we sat and waited for it to get dark. It was a fine sunset and there was a nice light breeze, and when the sun got pretty well down I started the engine and headed her in slow toward land.

Chapter Four

We lay offshore about a mile in the dark. The current had freshened up, with the sun down, and I noticed it running in. I could see the Morro light way down to the westward and the glow of Havana, and the lights opposite us were Rincõn and Baracoa. I headed her up against the current until I was past Bacuranao and nearly to Cojimar. Then I let her drift down. It was plenty dark but I could tell good where we were. I had all the lights out.

"What's it going to be, Harry?" Eddy asked me.

He was beginning to be spooked again.

"What do you think?"

"I don't know," he said. "You've got me worried." He was pretty close to the shakes and when he came near me he had a breath like a buzzard.

"What time is it?"

"I'll go down and see," he said. He came back up and said it was half past nine.

"Are you hungry?" I asked him.

"No," he said. "You know I couldn't eat, Harry."

"All right," I told him. "You can have one." After he had it I asked him how he felt. He said he felt fine.

"I'm going to give you a couple more in a little while," I told him. "I know you haven't got any *cojones* unless you've got rum and there isn't much on board. So you'd better go easy."

"Tell me what's up," said Eddy.

"Listen," I said, talking to him in the dark. "We're going to Bacuranao and pick up twelve Chinks. You take the wheel when I

tell you to and do what I tell you to. We'll take the twelve Chinks on board and we'll lock them below forward. Go on forward now and fasten the hatch from the outside."

He went up and I saw him shadowed against the dark. He came back and he said, "Harry, can I have one of those now?"

"No," I said. "I want you rum-brave. I don't want you useless."

"I'm a good man, Harry. You'll see."

"You're a rummy," I said. "Listen. One Chink is going to bring those twelve out. He's going to give me some money at the start. When they're all on board he's going to give me some more money. When you see him start to hand me money the second time you put her ahead and hook her up and head her out to sea. Don't you pay any attention to what happens. You keep her going out no matter what happens. Do you understand?"

"Yes."

"If any Chink starts bursting out of the cabin or coming through the hatch, once we're out and underway, you take that pump gun and blow them back as fast as they come out. Do you know how to use the pump gun?"

"No. But you can show me."

"You'd never remember. Do you know how to use the Winchester?"

"Just pump the lever and shoot it."

"That's right," I said. "Only don't shoot any holes in the hull."

"You'd better give me that other drink," Eddy said.

"All right. I'll give you a little one."

I gave him a real one. I knew they wouldn't make him drunk now; not pouring them into all that fear. But each one would work for a little while. After he drank this Eddy said, just as though he was happy, "So we're going to run Chinks. Well, by God, I always said I'd run Chinamen if I was ever broke."

"But you never got broke before, eh?" I said to him. He was funny all right.

I gave him three more drinks to keep him brave before it was half past ten. It was funny watching him and it kept me from thinking about it myself. I hadn't figured on all this wait. I'd planned to leave after dark, run out, just out of the glare, and coast along to Cojimar.

At a little before eleven I saw the two lights show on the point. I waited a little while and then I took her in slow. Bacuranao is a cove where there used to be a big dock for loading sand. There is a little river that comes in when the rains open the bar across the mouth. The northers, in the winter, pile the sand up and close it. They used to go in with schooners and load guavas from the river and there used to be a town. But the hurricane took it and it is all gone now except one house that some gallegos built out of the shacks the hurricane blew down and that they use for a clubhouse on Sundays when they come out to swim and picnic from Havana. There is one other house where the delegate lives but it is back from the beach.

Each little place like that all down the coast has a government delegate, but I figured the Chink must use his own boat and have him fixed. As we came in I could smell the sea grape and that sweet smell from the brush you get off the land.

"Get up forward," I said to Eddy.

"You can't hit anything on that side," he said. "The reef's on the other side as you go in." You see, he'd been a good man once.

"Watch her," I said, and I took her in to where I know they could see us. With no surf they could hear the engine. I didn't want to wait around, not knowing whether they saw us or not, so I flashed the running lights on once, just the green and red, and turned them off. Then I turned her and headed her out and let her lay there, just outside, with the engine just ticking. There was quite a little swell that close in.

"Come on back here," I said to Eddy and I gave him a real drink.

"Do you cock it first with your thumb?" he whispered to me. He

was sitting at the wheel now, and I had reached up and had both the cases open and the butts pulled out about six inches.

"That's right."

"Oh, boy," he said.

It certainly was wonderful what a drink would do to him and how quick.

We lay there and I could see a light from the delegate's house back through the brush. I saw the two lights on the point go down, and one of them moving off around the point. They must have blown the other one out.

Then, in a little while, coming out of the cove, I see a boat come toward us with a man sculling. I could tell by the way he swung back and forth. I knew he had a big oar. I was pretty pleased. If they were sculling that meant one man.

They came alongside.

"Good evening, captain," said Mr. Sing.

"Come astern and put her broadside," I said to him.

He said something to the kid who was sculling but he couldn't scull her backwards, so I took hold of the gunwale and passed her astern. There were eight men in the boat. The six Chinks, Mr. Sing, and the kid sculling. While I was pulling her astern I was waiting for something to hit me on top of the head but nothing did. I straightened up and let Mr. Sing hold onto the stern.

"Let's see what it looks like," I said.

He handed it to me and I took the roll of it up to where Eddy was at the wheel and put on the binnacle light. I looked at it carefully. It looked all right to me and I turned off the light. Eddy was trembling.

"Pour yourself one," I said. I saw him reach for the bottle and tip it up.

I went back to the stern.

"All right," I said. "Let six come on board."

Mr. Sing and the Cuban that sculled were having a job holding

their boat from knocking in what little swell there was. I heard Mr. Sing say something in Chink and all the Chinks in the boat started to climb onto the stern.

"One at a time," I said.

He said something again, and then one after another six Chinks came over the stern. They were all lengths and sizes.

"Show them forward," I said to Eddy.

"Right this way, gentlemen," said Eddy. By God, I knew he had taken a big one.

"Lock the cabin," I said, when they were all in.

"Yes, sir," said Eddy.

"I will return with the others," said Mr. Sing.

"O.K.," I told him.

I pushed them clear and the boy with him started sculling off.

"Listen," I said to Eddy. "You layoff that bottle. You're brave enough now."

"O.K., chief," said Eddy.

"What's the matter with you?"

"This is what I like to do," said Eddy. "You say you just pull it backward with your thumb?"

"You lousy rummy," I told him. "Give me a drink out of that."

"All gone," said Eddy. "Sorry, chief."

"Listen. What you have to do now is watch when he hands me the money and put her ahead."

"O.K., chief," said Eddy.

I reached up and took the other bottle and got the corkscrew and drew the cork. I took a good drink and went back to the stern, putting the cork in tight and laying the bottle behind two wicker jugs full of water.

"Here comes Mr. Sing," I said to Eddy.

"Yes, sir," said Eddy.

The boat came out sculling toward us.

He brought her astern and I let them do the holding on. Mr. Sing

had hold of the roller we had across the stern to slide a big fish aboard.

"Let them come aboard," I said, "one at a time."

Six more assorted Chinks came on board over the stern.

"Open up and show them forward," I told Eddy.

"Yes, sir," said Eddy.

"Lock the cabin."

"Yes, sir."

I saw he was at the wheel.

"All right, Mr. Sing," I said. "Let's see the rest of it."

He put his hand in his pocket and reached the money out toward me. I reached for it and grabbed his wrist with the money in his hand, and as he came forward on the stern I grabbed his throat with the other hand. I felt her start and then churn ahead as she hooked up and I was plenty busy with Mr. Sing but I could see the Cuban standing in the stern of the boat holding the sculling oar as we pulled away from her through all the flopping and bouncing Mr. Sing was doing. He was flopping and bouncing worse than any dolphin on a gaff.

I got his arm around behind him and came up on it but I brought it too far because I felt it go. When it went he made a funny little noise and came forward, me holding him throat and all, and bit me in the shoulder. But when I felt the arm go I dropped it. It wasn't any good to him arty more and I took him by the throat with both hands, and brother, that Mr. Sing would flop just like a fish, true, his loose arm flailing. But I got him forward onto his knees and had both thumbs well in behind his talkbox, and I bent the whole thing back until she cracked. Don't think you can't hear it crack, either.

I held him quiet just a second, and then I laid him down across the stern. He lay there, face up, quiet, in his good clothes, with his feet in the cockpit; and I left him.

I picked up the money off the cockpit floor and took it up and

put on the binnacle light and counted it. Then I took the wheel and told Eddy to look under the stern for some pieces of iron that I used for anchoring whenever we fished bottom-fishing on patches or rocky bottom where you wouldn't want to risk an anchor.

"I can't find anything," he said. He was scared being down there by Mr. Sing.

"Take the wheel," I said. "Keep her out."

There was a certain amount of moving around going on below but I wasn't spooked about them.

I found a couple of pieces of what I wanted, iron from the old coaling dock at Tortugas, and I took some snapper line and made a couple of good big pieces fast to Mr. Sing's ankles. Then when we were about two miles offshore I slid him over. He slid over smooth off the roller. I never even looked in his pockets. I didn't feel like fooling with him.

He'd bled a little on the stern from his nose and his mouth, and I dipped a bucket of water that nearly pulled me overboard the way we were going, and cleaned her off good with a scrub brush from under the stern.

"Slow her down," I said to Eddy.

"What if he floats up?" Eddy said.

"I dropped him in about seven hundred fathoms," I said. "He's going down all that way. That's a long way, brother. He won't float till the gas brings him up and all the time he's going with the current and baiting up fish. Hell," I said, "you don't have to worry about Mr. Sing."

"What did you have against him?" Eddy asked me.

"Nothing," I said. "He was the easiest man to do business with I ever met. I thought there must be something wrong all the time."

"What did you kill him for?"

"To keep from killing twelve other chinks," I told him.

"Harry," he said, "you've got to give me one because I can feel them coming on. It made me sick to see his head all loose like that."

So I gave him one.

"What about the Chinks?" Eddy said.

"I want to get them out as quick as I can," I told him. "Before they smell up the cabin."

"Where are you going to put them?"

"We'll run them right in to the long beach," I told him.

"Take her in now?"

"Sure," I said. "Take her in slow."

We came in slow over the reef and to where I could see the beach shine. There is plenty of water over the reef and inside it's all sandy bottom and slopes right into shore.

"Get up forward and give me the depth."

He kept sounding with a grains pole, motioning me on with the pole. He came back and motioned me to stop. I came astern on her.

"You're got about five feet."

"We've got to anchor," I said. "If anything happens so we haven't time to get her up, we can cut loose or break her off."

Eddy paid out rope and when finally she didn't drag he made her fast. She swung stern in.

"It's sandy bottom, you know," he said.

"How much water have we got at the stern?"

"Not over five feet."

"You take the rifle," I said. "And be careful."

"Let me have one," he said. He was plenty nervous.

I gave him one and took down the pump gun. I unlocked the cabin door, opened it, and said: "Come on out."

Nothing happened.

Then one Chink put his head out and saw Eddy standing there with a rifle and ducked back.

"Come on out. Nobody's going to hurt you," I said.

Nothing doing. Only lots of talk in Chink.

"Come on out, you!" Eddy said. My God, I knew he'd had the bottle.

“Put that bottle away,” I said to him, “or I’ll blow you out of the boat.”

“Come on out,” I said to them, “or I’ll shoot in at you.”

I saw one of them looking at the corner of the door and he saw the beach evidently because he begins to chatter.

“Come on,” I said. “or I’ll shoot.”

Out they came.

Now I tell you it would take a hell of a mean man to butcher a bunch of Chinks like that and I’ll bet there would be plenty of trouble, too, let alone mess.

They came out and they were scared and they didn’t have any guns but there were twelve of them. I walked backwards down to the stern holding the pump gun. “Get overboard,” I said. “It’s not over your heads.”

Nobody moved.

“Over you go.”

Nobody moved.

“You yellow rat-eating aliens,” Eddy said, “get overboard.”

“Shut your drunken mouth,” I told him.

“No swim,” one Chink said.

“No need swim,” I said. “No deep.”

“Come on, get overboard,” Eddy said.

“Come astern here,” I said. “Take your gun in one hand and your grain pole in the other and show them how deep it is.”

He showed them, holding up the wet pole.

“No need swim?” the one asked me.

“No.”

“True?”

“Yes.”

“Where we?”

“Cuba.”

“You damn crook,” he said and went over the side, hanging on and then letting go. His head went under but he came up and his

chin was out of water. “Damn crook,” he said. “Goddamn crook.”

He was mad and plenty brave. He said something in Chink and the others started going into the water off the stern.

“All right,” I said to Eddy. “Get the anchor up.”

As we headed her out, the moon started to come up, and you could see the Chinks with just their heads out of water, walking ashore, and the shine of the beach and the brush behind.

We got out past the reef and I looked back once and saw the beach and the mountains starting to show up; then I put her on her course for Key West.

“Now you can take a sleep,” I said to Eddy. “No, wait, go below and open all the ports to get the stink out and bring me the iodine.”

“What’s the matter?” he said when he brought it.

“I cut my finger.”

“Do you want me to steer?”

“Get a sleep,” I said. “I’ll wake you up.”

He lay down on the built-in bunk in the cockpit, over the gas tank, and in a little while he was asleep.

Chapter Five

I held the wheel with my knee and opened up my shirt and saw where Mr. Sing bit me. It was quite a bite and I put iodine on it, and then I sat there steering and wondering whether a bite from a Chinaman was poisonous, and listened to her running nice and smooth and the water washing along her and I figured, Hell, no, that bite wasn't poisonous. A man like that Mr. Sing probably scrubbed his teeth two or three times a day. Some Mr. Sing. He certainly wasn't much of a business man. Maybe he was. Maybe he just trusted me. I tell you I couldn't figure him.

Well, now it was all simple except for Eddy. Because he's a rummy he'll talk when he gets hot. I sat there steering and I looked at him and I thought, hell, he's as well off dead as the way he is, and then I'm all clear. When I found he was on board I decided I'd have to do away with him but then when everything had come out so nice I didn't have the heart. But looking at him lying there it certainly was a temptation. But then I thought there's no sense spoiling it by doing something you'd be sorry for afterwards. Then I started to think he wasn't even on the crew list and I'd have to pay a fine for bringing him in and I didn't know how to consider him.

Well, I had plenty of time to think about it and I held her on her course and every once in a while I'd take a drink out of the bottle he'd brought on board. There wasn't much in it, and when I'd finished it, I opened up the only one I had left, and I tell you I felt pretty good steering, and it was a pretty night to cross. It had turned out a good trip all right, finally, even though it had looked plenty bad plenty of times.

When it got daylight Eddy woke up. He said he felt terrible.

"Take the wheel a minute," I told him. "I want to look around."

I went back to the stern and threw a little water on her. But she was perfectly clean. I scrubbed the brush over the side. I unloaded the guns and stowed them below. But I still kept the gun on my belt. It was fresh and nice as you want it below, no smell at all. A little water had come in through the starboard port onto one of the bunks was all; so I shut the ports. There wasn't a customhouse officer in the world could smell Chink in her now.

I saw the clearance papers in the net bag hanging up under her framed license where I'd shoved them when I came on board and I took them out to look them over. Then I went up to the cockpit.

"Listen," I said. "How did you get on the crew list? "

"I met the broker when he was leaving for the consulate and told him I was going."

"God looks after rummies," I told him and I took the thirty-eight off and stowed it down below.

I made some coffee down below and then I came up and took the wheel.

"There's coffee below," I told him.

"Brother, coffee wouldn't do me any good." You know you had to be sorry for him. He certainly looked bad.

About nine o'clock we saw the Sand Key light just about dead ahead. We'd seen tankers going up the Gulf for quite a while.

"We'll be in in a couple of hours now," I said to him. "I'm going to give you the same four dollars a day just as if Johnson had paid."

"How much did you get out of last night?" he asked me.

"Only six hundred," I told him.

I don't know whether he believed me or not. "Don't I share in it?"

"That's your share," I told him. "What I just told you, and if you ever open your mouth about last night I'll hear of it and I'll do away with you."

“You know I’m no squealer, Harry.”

“You’re a rummy. But no matter how rum dumb you get, if you ever talk about that, I promise you.”

“I’m a good man,” he said. “You oughtn’t to talk to me like that.”

“They can’t make it fast enough to keep you a good man,” I told him. But I didn’t worry about him anymore because who was going to believe him? Mr. Sing wouldn’t make any complaints. The Chinks weren’t going to. You know the boy that sculled them out wasn’t. He wouldn’t want to get himself in trouble. Eddy would mouth about it sooner or later, maybe, but who believes a rummy?

Why, who could prove anything? Naturally it would have made plenty more talk when they saw his name on the crew list. That was luck for me, all right. I could have said he fell overboard, but it makes plenty talk. Plenty of luck for Eddy, too. Plenty of luck, all right.

Then we came to the edge of the stream and the water quit being blue and was light and greenish and inside I could see the stakes on the Eastern and the Western Dry Rocks and the wireless masts at Key West and the La Concha hotel up high out of all the low houses and plenty smoke from out where they’re burning garbage. Sand Key light was plenty close now and you could see the boathouse and the little dock alongside the light and I knew we were only forty minutes away now and I felt good to be getting back and I had a good stake now for the summertime.

“What do you say about a drink, Eddy?” I said to him.

“Ah, Harry,” he said, “I always knew you were my pal.”

That night I was sitting in the living room smoking a cigar and drinking a whiskey and water and listening to Gracie Allen on the radio. The girls had gone to the show and sitting there I felt sleepy and I felt good. There was somebody at the front door and Marie, my wife, got up from where she was sitting and went to it. She came back and said, “It’s that rummy, Eddie Marshall. He says he’s

got to see you."

"Tell him to get out before I run him out," I told her.

She came back in and sat down and looking out the window where I was sitting with my feet up I could see Eddy going along the road under the arc light with another rummy he'd picked up, the two of them swaying, and their shadows from the arc light swaying worse.

"Poor goddamned rummies," Marie said. "I pity a rummy."

"He's a lucky rummy."

"There ain't any lucky rummies," Marie said. "You know that, Harry."

"No," I said. "I guess there aren't."

{PART TWO}

Harry Morgan (Fall)

Chapter Six

They came on across in the night and it blew a big breeze from the northwest. When the sun was up he sighted a tanker coming down the Gulf and she stood up so high and white with the sun on her in that cold air it looked like tall buildings rising out of the sea and he said to the nigger, “Where the hell are we?”

The nigger raised himself up to look.

“Ain’t nothing like that this side of Miami.”

“You know damn well we ain’t been carried up to no Miami,” he told the nigger.

“All I say ain’t no buildings like that on no Florida keys.”

“We’ve been steering for Sand Key.”

“We got to see it then. It or American shoals.”

Then in a little while he saw it was a tanker and not buildings and then in less than an hour he saw Sand Key light, straight, thin and brown, rising out of the sea right where it ought to be.

“You got to have confidence steering,” he told the nigger.

“I got confidence,” the nigger said. “But the way this trip gone I ain’t got confidence no more.”

“How’s your leg?”

“It hurts me all the time.”

“It ain’t nothing,” the man said. “You keep it clean and wrapped up and it’ll heal by its-self.”

He was steering to the westward now to go in to lay up for the day in the mangroves by Woman Key where he would not see anybody and where the boat was to come out to meet them.

“You’re going to be all right,” he told the nigger.

“I don’t know,” the nigger said. “I hurt bad.”

“I’m going to fix you up good when we get in to the place,” he told him. “You aren’t shot bad. Quit worrying.”

“I’m shot,” he said. “I ain’t never been shot before. Any way I’m shot is bad.”

“You’re just scared.”

“No, sir. I’m shot. And I’m hurting bad. I’ve been throbbing all night.”

The nigger went on grumbling like that and he could not keep from taking the bandage off to look at it.

“Leave it alone,” the man who was steering told him. The nigger lay on the floor of the cockpit and there were sacks of liquor, shaped like hams, piled everywhere. He had made himself a place in them to lay down in. Every time he moved there was the noise of broken glass in the sacks and there was the odor of spilled liquor. The liquor had run all over everything. The man was steering in for Woman Key now. He could see it now plainly.

“I hurt,” the nigger said. “I hurt worse all the time.”

“I’m sorry, Wesley,” the man said. “But I got to steer.”

“You treat a man no better than a dog,” the nigger said. He was getting ugly now. But the man was still sorry for him.

“I’m going to make you comfortable, Wesley,” he said. “You lay quiet now.”

“You don’t care what happens to a man,” the nigger said. “You ain’t hardly human.”

“I’m going to fix you up good,” the man said. “You just lay quiet.”

“You ain’t going to fix me up,” the nigger said.

The man, whose name was Harry Morgan, said nothing then because he liked the nigger and there was nothing to do now but hit him, and he couldn’t hit him. The nigger kept on talking.

“Why didn’t we stop when they started shooting?” The man did not answer.

“Ain’t a man’s life worth more than a load of liquor?”

The man was intent on his steering.

“All we have to do is stop and let them take the liquor.”

“No,” the man said. “They take the liquor and the boat and you go to jail.”

“I don’t mind jail,” the nigger said. “But I never wanted to get shot.”

He was getting on the man’s nerves now and the man was becoming tired of hearing him talk.

“Who the hell’s shot worse?” he asked him. “You or me?”

“You’re shot worse,” the nigger said. “But I ain’t never been shot. I didn’t figure to get shot. I ain’t paid to get shot. I don’t want to be shot.”

“Take it easy, Wesley,” the man told him. “It don’t do you any good to talk like that.”

They were coming up on the Key now. They were inside the shoals and as he headed her into the channel it was hard to see with the sun on the water. The nigger was going out of his head, or becoming religious because he was hurt; anyway he was talking all the time.

“Why they run liquor now?” he said. “Prohibition’s over. Why they keep up a traffic like that? Whyn’t they bring the liquor in on the ferry?”

The man steering was watching the channel closely.

“Why don’t people be honest and decent and make a decent honest living?”

The man saw where the water was rippling smooth off the bank even when he could not see the bank in the sun and he turned her off. He swung her around, spinning the wheel with one arm, and then the channel opened out and he took her slowly right up to the edge of the mangroves. He came astern on the engines and threw out the two clutches.

“I can put an anchor down,” he said. “But I can’t get no anchor

up."

"I can't even move," the nigger said.

"You're certainly in a hell of a shape," the man told him.

He had a difficult time breaking out, lifting, and dropping the small anchor but he got it over and paid out quite a lot of rope and the boat swung in against the mangroves so they came right into the cockpit. Then he went back and down into the cockpit. He thought the cockpit was a hell of a sight, all right.

All night after he had dressed the nigger's wound and the nigger had bandaged his arm he had been watching the compass, steering, and when it came daylight he had seen the nigger laying there in the sacks in the middle of the cockpit, but then he was watching the seas and the compass and looking for the Sand Key light and he had never observed carefully how things were. Things were bad.

The nigger was lying in the middle of the load of sacked liquor with his leg up. There were eight bullet holes through the cockpit splintered wide. The glass was broken in the windshield. He did not know how much stuff was smashed and wherever the nigger had not bled, he, himself, had bled. But the worst thing, the way he felt at the moment, was the smell of booze. Everything was soaked in it. Now the boat was lying quietly against the mangroves but he could not stop feeling the motion of the big sea they had been in all night in the Gulf.

"I'm going to make some coffee," he told the nigger. "Then I'll fix you up again."

"I don't want no coffee."

"I do," the man told him. But down below he began to feel dizzy so he came out on deck again.

"I guess we won't have coffee," he said. "I want some water."

"All right."

He gave the negro a cup of water out of a demijohn.

"Why you want to keep on running for when they started to shoot?"

“Why they want to shoot?” the man answered.

“I want a doctor,” the nigger told him.

“What’s a doctor going to do that I ain’t done for you?”

“Doctor going to cure me.”

“You’ll have a doctor tonight when the boat comes out.”

“I don’t want to wait for no boat.”

“All right,” the man said. “We’re going to dump this liquor now.”

He started to dump it and it was hard work one handed. A sack of liquor only weighs forty pounds but he had not dumped very many of them before he became dizzy again. He sat down in the cockpit and then he lay down.

“You going to kill youself,” the nigger said.

The man lay quietly in the cockpit with his head against one of the sacks. The branches of the mangroves had come into the cockpit and they made a shadow over him where he lay. He could hear the wind above the mangroves and looking out at the high, cold sky, see the thin-blown clouds of the norther.

“Nobody going to come out with this breeze,” he thought. “They won’t look for us to have started with this blowing.”

“You think they’ll come out?” the nigger asked.

“Sure,” the man said. “Why not?”

“It’s blowing too hard.”

“They’re looking for us.”

“Not with it like this. What you want to lie to me for?” The nigger was talking with his mouth almost against a sack.

“Take it easy, Wesley,” the man told him.

“Take it easy, the man says,” the nigger went on. “Take it easy. Take what easy? Take dyin’ like a dog easy? You got me here. Get me out.”

“Take it easy,” the man said, kindly.

“They ain’t coming,” the nigger said. “I know they ain’t coming. I’m cold, I tell you. I can’t stand this pain and cold, I tell you.”

The man sat up feeling hollow and unsteady. The nigger's eyes watched him as he rose on one knee, his right arm dangling, took the hand of his right arm in his left hand and placed it between his knees and then pulled himself up by the plank nailed above the gunwale until he stood, looking down, down at the nigger, his right hand still held between his thighs. He was thinking that he had never really felt pain before.

"If I keep it out straight, pulled out straight, it don't hurt so bad," he said.

"Let me tie it up in a sling," the nigger said.

"I can't make a bend in the elbow," the man said. "It stiffened that way."

"What we going to do?"

"Dump this liquor," the man told him. "Can't you put over what you can reach, Wesley?"

The nigger tried to move to reach a sack, then groaned and lay back.

"Do you hurt that bad, Wesley?"

"Oh, God," the nigger said.

"You don't think once you moved it, it wouldn't hurt so bad?"

"I'm shot," the nigger said. "I ain't going to move. The man wants me to go to dumpin' liquor when I'm shot."

"Take it easy."

"You say that once more I go crazy."

"Take it easy," the man said quietly.

The nigger made a howling noise and, shuffling with his hands on the deck, picked up the whetstone from under the coaming.

"I'll kill you," he said. "I'll cut your heart out."

"Not with no whetstone," the man said. "Take it easy, Wesley."

The nigger blubbered with his face against a sack. The man went on slowly lifting the sacked packages of liquor and dropping them over the side.

Chapter Seven

While he was dumping the liquor he heard the sound of a motor and looking, saw a boat headed toward them, coming down the channel around the end of the key. It was a white boat with a buff painted house and a windshield.

"Boat coming," he said. "Come on, Wesley."

"I can't."

"I'm remembering from now on," the man said. "Before was different."

"Go ahead and remember," the nigger told him. "I ain't forgot nothing either."

Working fast now, the sweat running down his face, not stopping to watch the boat coming slowly down the channel, the man picked up the sacked packages of liquor with his good arm and dropped them over the side.

"Roll over," he reached for the package under the nigger's head and swung it over the side. The nigger sat up.

"Here they are," he said. The boat was almost abeam of them.

"It's Captain Willie," the nigger said. "With a party."

In the stern of the white boat two men in flannels and white cloth hats sat in fishing chairs trolling and an old man in a felt hat and a windbreaker held the tiller and steered the boat close past the mangroves where the booze boat lay.

"What do you say, Harry?" the old man called as he passed. The man called Harry waved his good arm in reply. The boat went on past, the two men who were fishing looking towards the booze boat and talking to the old man. Harry could not hear what they were

saying.

"He'll make a turn at the mouth and come back," Harry said to the negro. He went below and came up with a blanket. "Let me cover you up."

"'Bout time you cover me up. They couldn't help but see that liquor. What we goin' to do?"

"Willie's a good skate," the man said. "He'll tell them in town we're out here. Those fellows fishing ain't going to bother us. What they care about us?"

He felt very shaky now and he sat down on the steering seat and held his right arm tight between his thighs. His knees were shaking and with the shaking he could feel the ends of the bone in his upper arm grate. He opened his knees, lifted his arm out, and let it hang by his side. He was sitting there, his arm hanging, when the boat passed them coming back up the channel. The two men in the fishing chairs were talking. They had put up their rods and one of them was looking at him through a pair of glasses. They were too far out for him to hear what they were saying. It would not have helped him if he had.

On board the charter boat *South Florida*, trolling down the Woman Key channel, because it was too rough to go out to the reef, Captain Willie Adams was thinking, so Harry crossed last night. That boy's got *cojones*. He must have got that whole blow. She's a sea boat all right. How you suppose he smashed his windshield? Damned if I'd cross a night like last night. Damned if I'd ever run liquor from Cuba. They bring it all from Mariel now. It's supposed to be wide open. "What's that you say, Cap?"

"What boat is that?" asked one of the men in the fishing chairs.

"That boat?"

"Yes, that boat."

"Oh, that's a Key West boat."

"What I said was, whose boat is it?"

“I wouldn’t know that, Cap.”

“Is the owner a fisherman?”

“Well, some say he is.”

“What do you mean?”

“He does a little of everything.”

“You don’t know his name?”

“No, sir.”

“You called him Harry.”

“Not me.”

“I heard you call him Harry.”

Captain Willie Adams took a good look at the man who was speaking to him. He saw a high-cheekboned, thin-lipped, very ruddy face with deep set gray eyes and a contemptuous mouth looking at him from under a white canvas hat.

“I must have called him that by mistake,” Captain Willie said.

“You can see that the man is wounded, Doctor,” the other man said, handing the glasses to his companion.

“I can see that without glasses,” the man addressed as Doctor said. “Who is that man?”

“I wouldn’t know,” said Captain Willie.

“Well, you will know,” the man with the contemptuous mouth said. “Write down the numbers on the bow.”

“I have them, Doctor.”

“We’ll go over and have a look,” the Doctor said.

“Are you a doctor?” Captain Willie asked.

“Not of medicine,” the gray-eyed man told him.

“If you’re not a medical doctor I wouldn’t go over there.”

“Why not?”

“If he wanted us he would have signalled us. If he don’t want us it’s none of our business. Down here everybody aims to mind their own business.”

“All right. Suppose you mind yours then. Take us over to that boat.”

Captain Willie continued on his way up the channel, the two-cylinder Palmer coughing steadily.

"Didn't you hear me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why don't you obey my order?"

"Who the hell you think you are?" asked Captain Willie.

"That's not the question. Do as I tell you."

"Who do you think you are?"

"All right. For your information, I'm one of the three most important men in the United States today."

"What the hell you doing in Key West, then?" The other man leaned forward. "He's Frederick Harrison," he said impressively.

"I never heard of him," said Captain Willie.

"Well, you will," said Frederick Harrison. "And so will everyone in this stinking jerkwater little town if I have to grub it out by the roots."

"You're a nice fellow," said Captain Willie. "How did you get so important?"

"He's one of the biggest men in the administration," said the other man.

"Nuts," said Captain Willie. "If he's all that what's he doing in Key West?"

"He's just here for a rest," the secretary explained. "He's going to be governor-general of—"

"That's enough, Willis," Frederick Harrison said.

"Now will you take us over to that boat," he said smiling. He had a smile which was reserved for such occasions.

"No, sir."

"Listen, you half-witted fisherman. I'll make life so miserable for you—"

"Yes," said Captain Willie.

"You don't know who I am."

"None of it don't mean anything to me," said Captain Willie.

“That man is a bootlegger, isn’t he?”

“What do *you* think?”

“There’s probably a reward for him.”

“I doubt that.”

“He’s a lawbreaker.”

“He’s got a family and he’s got to eat and feed them. Who the hell do you eat off of with people working here in Key West for the government for six dollars and a half a week?”

“He’s wounded. That means he’s been in trouble.”

“Unless he shot hisself for fun.”

“You can save that sarcasm. You’re going over to that boat and we’re going to take that man and that boat into custody.”

“Into where?”

“Into Key West.”

“Are you an officer?”

“I’ve told you who he is,” the secretary said.

“All right,” said Captain Willie. He pushed the tiller hard over and turned the boat, coming so close to the edge of the channel that the propeller threw up a circling cloud of marl. He chugged down the channel toward where the other boat lay against the mangroves.

“Have you a gun aboard?” Frederick Harrison asked Captain Willie.

“No, sir.”

The two men in flannels were standing up now watching the booze boat.

“This is better fun than fishing, eh, Doctor?” the secretary said.

“Fishing is nonsense,” said Frederick Harrison. “If you catch a sailfish what do you do with it? You can’t eat it. This is really interesting. I’m glad to see this at first hand. Wounded as he is that man cannot escape. It’s too rough at sea. We know his boat.”

“You’re really capturing him single-handed,” said the secretary admiringly.

“And unarmed, too,” said Frederick Harrison. “With no G men

nonsense," said the secretary.

"Edgar Hoover exaggerates his publicity," said Frederick Harrison. "I feel we've given him about enough rope. Pull alongside," he said to Captain Willie. Captain Willie threw out his clutch and the boat drifted.

"Hey," Captain Willie called to the other boat. "Keep your heads down."

"What's that?" Harrison said angrily.

"Shut up," said Captain Willie. "Hey," he called over to the other boat. "Listen. Get on into town and take it easy. Never mind the boat. They'll take the boat. Dump your load and get into town. I got a guy here on board some kind of a stool from Washington. More important than the President, he says. He wants to pinch you. He thinks you're a bootlegger. He's got the numbers of the boat. I ain't never seen you so I don't know who you are. I couldn't identify you —"

The boats had drifted apart. Captain Willie went on shouting, "I don't know where this place is where I seen you. I wouldn't know how to get back here."

"O.K.," came a shout from the booze boat.

"I'm taking this big alphabet man fishing until dark," Captain Willie shouted.

"O.K."

"He loves to fish," Captain Willie yelled, his voice almost breaking. "But the son of a bitch claims you can't eat 'em."

"Thanks, brother," came the voice of Harry.

"That chap your brother?" asked Frederick Harrison, his face very red but his love for information still unappeased.

"No, sir," said Captain Willie. "Most everybody goes in boats calls each other brother."

"We'll go into Key West," Frederick Harrison said; but he said it without great conviction.

"No, sir," said Captain Willie. "You gentlemen chartered me for

a day. I'm going to see you get your money's worth. You called me a halfwit but I'll see you get a full day's charter."

"Take us to Key West," Harrison said.

"Yes, sir," said Captain Willie. "Later on. But listen, sailfish is just as good eating as kingfish. When we used to sell them to Rios for the Havana market we got ten cents a pound same as kings."

"Oh, *shut* up," said Frederick Harrison.

"I thought you'd be interested in these things as a government man. Ain't you mixed up in the prices of things that we eat or something? Ain't that it? Making them more costly or something. Making the grits cost more and the grunts less?"

"Oh, shut up," said Harrison.

Chapter Eight

On the booze boat Harry had the last sack over.

"Get me the fish knife," he said to the nigger. "It's gone."

Harry pressed the self-starters and started the two engines. He'd put a second engine in her when he went back to running liquor when the depression had put charter boat fishing on the bum. He got the hatchet and with his left hand chopped the anchor rope through against the bitt. It'll sink and they'll grapple it when they pick up the load, he thought. I'll run her up into the Garrison Bight and if they're going to take her they'll take her. I got to get to a doctor. I don't want to lose my arm and the boat both. The load is worth as much as the boat. There wasn't much of it smashed. A little smashed can smell plenty.

He shoved the port clutch in and swung out away from the mangroves with the tide. The engines ran smoothly. Captain Willie's boat was two miles away now headed for Boca Grande. I guess the tide's high enough to go through the lakes now, Harry thought.

He shoved in his starboard clutch and the engines roared as he pushed up the throttle. He could feel her bow rise and the green mangroves coasted swiftly alongside as the boat sucked the water away from their roots. I hope they don't take her, he thought. I hope they can fix my arm. How was I to know they'd shoot at us in Mariel after we could go and come there open for six months. That's Cubans for you. Somebody didn't pay somebody so we got the shooting. That's Cubans all right.

"Hey, Wesley," he said, looking back into the cockpit where the nigger lay with the blanket over him. "How you feeling?"

“God,” said Wesley. “I couldn’t feel no worse.”

“You’ll feel worse when the old doctor probes for it,” Harry told him.

“You ain’t human,” the nigger said. “You ain’t got human feelings.”

That old Willie is a good skate, Harry was thinking. There’s a good skate that old Willie. We did better to come in than to wait. It was foolish to wait. I felt so dizzy and sick-like I lost my judgment.

Ahead now he could see the white of the La Concha hotel, the wireless masts, and the houses of town. He could see the car ferries lying at the Trumbo dock where he would go around to head up for the Garrison Bight. That old Willie, he thought. He was giving them hell. Wonder who those buzzards were. Damn if I don’t feel plenty bad right now. I feel plenty dizzy. We did right to come in. We did right not to wait.

“Mr. Harry,” said the nigger, “I’m sorry I couldn’t help dump that stuff.”

“Hell,” said Harry, “ain’t no nigger any good when he’s shot. You’re a all right nigger, Wesley.”

Above the roar of the motors and the high, slapping rush of the boat through the water he felt a strange, hollow singing in his heart. He always felt this way coming home at the end of a trip. I hope they can fix that arm, he thought. I got a lot of use for that arm.

{PART THREE}

Harry Morgan (Winter)

Chapter Nine

Albert Speaking

We were all in there at Freddie's place and this tall thin lawyer comes in and says, "Where's Juan?"

"He ain't back yet," somebody said.

"I know he's back and I've got to see him."

"Sure, you tipped them off to him and you got him indicted and now you're going to defend him," Harry said. "Don't you come around here asking where he is. You probably got him in your pocket."

"Balls to you," said the lawyer. "I've got a job for him."

"Well, go look for him someplace else," Harry said. "He ain't here."

"I've got a job for him, I tell you," the lawyer said.

"You ain't got a job for anybody. All you are is poison."

Just then the old man with the long gray hair over the back of his collar who sells the rubber goods specialties comes in for a quarter of a pint and Freddy pours it out for him and he corks it up and scuttles back across the street with it.

"What happened to your arm?" the lawyer asked Harry. Harry has the sleeve pinned up to the shoulder.

"I didn't like the look of it so I cut it off," Harry told him.

"You and who else cut it off?"

"Me and a doctor cut it off," Harry said. He had been drinking and he was getting a little along with it. "I held still and he cut it off. If they cut them off for being in other people's pockets you wouldn't have no hands nor no feet."

“What happened to it that they had to cut it off?” the lawyer asked him.

“Take it easy,” Harry told him.

“No, I’m asking you. What happened to it and where were you?”

“Go bother somebody else,” Harry told him. “You know where I was and you know what happened. Keep your mouth shut and don’t bother me.”

“I want to talk to you,” the lawyer told him.

“Then talk to me.”

“No, in back.”

“I don’t want to talk to you. No good ever comes of you. You’re poison.”

“I’ve got something for you. Something good.”

“All right. I’ll listen to you once,” Harry told him.

“What’s it about? Juan?”

“No. Not about Juan.”

They went back behind the bend of the bar into where the booths are and they were gone quite a while. During the time they were gone Big Lucie’s daughter came in with that girl from their place that she’s always around with, and they sat at the bar and had a Coca-Cola.

“They tell me they ain’t going to let no girls out on the streets after six o’clock at night and no girls in any of the places,” Freddy says to Big Lucie’s daughter.

“That’s what they say.”

“It’s getting to be a hell of a town,” Freddy says. “Hell of a town is right. You just walk outside to get a sandwich and a Coca-Cola and they arrest you and fine you fifteen dollars.”

“That’s all they pick on now,” says Big Lucie’s daughter. “Any kind of sporting people. Anybody with any sort of a cheerful outlook.”

“If something don’t happen to this town pretty quick things are going to be bad.”

Just then Harry and the lawyer came back out and the lawyer said, “You’ll be out there then?”

“Why not bring them here?”

“No. They don’t want to come in. Out there.” “All right,” Harry said and stepped up to the bar and the lawyer went on out.

“What will you have, Al?” he asked me.

“Bacardi.”

“Give us two Bacardis, Freddy.” Then he turned to me and said, “What are you doing now, AI?”

“Working on the relief.”

“What doing?”

“Digging the sewer . Taking the old streetcar rails up.”

“What do you get?”

“Seven and a half.”

“A week?”

“What did you think?”

“How do you drink in here?”

“I wasn’t till you asked me,” I told him. He edged over a little towards me. “You want to make a trip?”

“Depends on what it is.”

“We’ll talk about that.”

“All right.”

“Come on out in the car,” he said. “So long, Freddy.” He breathed a little fast the way he did when he’s been drinking and I walked up along where the street had been tore up, where we’d been working all day, to the corner where his car was. “Get in,” he said.

“Where are we going?” I asked him.

“I don’t know,” he said. “I’m going to find out.”

We drove up Whitehead Street and he didn’t say anything and at the head of the street he turned to the left and we drove across the head of town to White Street and out on it to the beach. All the time Harry didn’t say anything and we turned onto the sand road

and drove along it to the boulevard. Out on the boulevard he pulled the car over to the edge of the sidewalk and stopped.

"Some strangers want to charter my boat to make a trip," he said.

"The customs got your boat tied up."

"The strangers don't know that."

"What kind of a trip?"

"They say they want to carry somebody over that has to go to Cuba to do some business and can't come in by the plane or boat. Bee-lips was telling me."

"Do they do that?"

"Sure. All the time since the revolution. It sounds all right. Plenty of people' go that way."

"What about the boat."

"We'll have to steal the boat. You know they ain't got her fixed so I can't start her."

"How you going to get her out of the sub-base?"

"I'll get her out."

"How're we coming back?"

"I'll have to figure that. If you don't want to go, say so."

"I'd just as soon go if there's any money in it."

"Listen," he said. "You're making seven dollars and a half a week. You got three kids in school that are hungry at noon. You got a family that their bellies hurt and I give you a chance to make a little money."

"You ain't said how much money. You got to have money for taking chances."

"There ain't much money in any kind of chances now, Al," he said. "Look at me. I used to make thirty-five dollars a day right through the season taking people out fishing. Now I get shot and lose an arm, and my boat, running a lousy load of liquor that's worth hardly as much as my boat. But let me tell you, my kids ain't going to have their bellies hurt and I ain't going to dig sewers for

the government for less money than will feed them. I can't dig now anyway. I don't know who made the laws but I know there ain't no law that you got to go hungry."

"I went out on strike against those wages," I told him.

"And you come back to work," he said. "They said you were striking against charity. You always worked, didn't you? You never asked anybody for charity."

"There ain't any work," I said. "There ain't any work at living wages anywhere."

"Why?"

"I don't know."

"Neither do I," he said. "But my family is going to eat as long as anybody eats. What they're trying to do is starve you Conchs out of here so they can burn down the shacks and put up apartments and make this a tourist town. That's what I hear. I hear they're buying up lots, and then after the poor people are starved out and gone somewhere else to starve some more they're going to come in and make it into a beauty spot for tourists."

"You talk like a radical," I said.

"I ain't no radical," he said. "I'm sore. I been sore a long time."

"Losing your arm don't make you feel better."

"The hell with my arm. You lose an arm you lose an arm. There's worse things than lose an arm. You've got two arms and you've got two of something else. And a man's still a man with one arm or with one of those. The hell with it," he says. "I don't want to talk about it." Then after a minute he says, "I got those other two still." Then he started the car and said, "Come on, we'll go see these fellows."

We rode along the boulevard with the breeze blowing and a few cars going past and the smell of dead sea grass on the cement where the waves had gone over the seawall at high tide, Harry driving with his left arm. I always liked him all right and I'd gone in a boat with him plenty of times in the old days, but he was changed now

since he lost his arm and that fellow down visiting from Washington made an affidavit that he saw the boat unloading liquor that time, and the customs seized her. When he was in a boat he always felt good and without his boat he felt plenty bad. I think he was glad of an excuse to steal her. He knew he couldn't keep her but maybe he could make a piece of money with her while he had her. I needed money bad enough but I didn't want to get in any trouble. I said to him, "You know I don't want to get in any real trouble, Harry."

"What worse trouble you going to get in than you're in now?" he said. "What the hell worse trouble is there than starving?"

"I'm not starving," I said. "What the hell you always talking about starving for?"

"Maybe you're not, but your kids are."

"Cut it out," I said. "I'll work with you but you can't talk that way to me."

"All right," he said. "But be sure you want the job. I can get plenty of men in this town."

"I want it," I said. "I told you I want it."

"Then cheer up."

"You cheer up," I said. "You're the only one that's talking like a radical."

"Aw, cheer up," he said. "None of you Conchs has any guts."

"Since when ain't you a Conch?"

"Since the first good meal I ever ate." He was mean talking now, all right, and since he was a boy he never had no pity for nobody. But he never had no pity for himself either.

"All right," I said to him.

"Take it easy," he said. Ahead of us I could see the lights of this place.

"We're going to meet them here," Harry said.

"Keep your mouth buttoned up."

"The hell with you."

"Aw, take it easy," Harry said as we turned into the runway and

drove around to the back of the place. He was a bully and he was bad spoken but I always liked him all right.

We stopped the car in back of this place and went into the kitchen where the man's wife was cooking at a stove. "Hello, Freda," Harry said to her. "Where's Bee-lips?"

"He's right in there, Harry. Hello, Albert."

"Hello, Miss Richards," I said. I knew her ever since she used to be in jungle town, but two or three of the hardest working married women in town used to be sporting women and this was a hard working woman, I tell you that. "Your folks all well?" she asked me.

"They're all fine."

We went on through the kitchen and into this back room. There was Bee-lips, the lawyer, and four Cubans with him, sitting at a table.

"Sit down," said one of them in English. He was a tough looking fellow, heavy, with a big face and a voice deep in his throat, and he had been drinking plenty you could see. "What's your name?"

"What's yours?" said Harry.

"All right," said this Cuban. "Have it your own way. Where's the boat?"

"She's down at the yacht basin," Harry said.

"Who's this?" the Cuban asked him, looking at me.

"My mate," Harry said. The Cuban was looking me over and the other Cubans were looking us both over. "He looks hungry," the Cuban said and laughed. The others didn't laugh. "You want a drink?"

"All right," Harry said. "What? Bacardi?"

"Whatever you're drinking," Harry told him.

"Does your mate drink?"

"I'll have one," I said.

"Nobody asked you yet," the big Cuban said. "I just asked if you drank."

"Oh, cut it out, Roberto," one of the other Cubans, a young one,

not much more than a kid, said. “Can’t you do anything without getting nasty?”

“What do you mean nasty? I just asked if he drinks. If you hire somebody don’t you ask if he drinks?”

“Give him a drink,” said the other Cuban. “Let’s talk business.”

“What you want for the boat, big boy?” the deep-voiced Cuban called Roberto asked Harry.

“Depends on what you want to do with her,” Harry said.

“Take the four of us to Cuba.”

“Where in Cuba?”

“Cabañas. Close to Cabañas. Down the coast from Mariel. You know where it is?”

“Sure,” said Harry. “Just take you there?”

“That’s all. Take us there and put us ashore.” “Three hundred dollars.”

“Too much. What if we charter you by the day and guarantee you two weeks’ charter?”

“Forty dollars a day and you put up fifteen hundred dollars for if anything happens to the boat. Do I have to clear it?”

“No.”

“You pay for the gas and oil,” Harry told them.

“We’ll give you two hundred dollars to take us over there and put us ashore.”

“No.”

“How much do you want?”

“I told you.”

“That’s too much.”

“No, it isn’t,” Harry told him. “I don’t know who you are. I don’t know what your business is and I don’t know who shoots at you. I got to cross the Gulf twice in the winter time. Anyway I’m risking my boat. I’ll carry you for two hundred and you can put up a thousand for a guaranty nothing happens to the boat.”

“That’s reasonable,” Bee-lips told them. “That’s more than

reasonable."

The Cubans started talking in Spanish. I couldn't understand them but I knew Harry could.

"All right," the big one, Roberto, said. "When can you start?"

"Any time tomorrow night."

"Maybe we don't want to go until the night after," one of them said.

"That's O.K. with me," Harry said. "Only let me know in time."

"Is your boat in good shape?"

"Sure," said Harry.

"She is a nice looking boat," the young one of them said.

"Where did you see her? "

"Mr. Simmons, the lawyer here, showed her to me."

"Oh," said Harry.

"Have a drink," said another of the Cubans. "Have you been to Cuba much?"

"A few times."

"Speak Spanish?"

"I never learned it," Harry said.

I saw Bee-lips, the lawyer, look at him, but he is so crooked himself that he's always more pleased if people aren't telling the truth. Just like when he came in to speak to Harry about this job he couldn't speak to him straight. He had to pretend he wanted to see Juan Rodriguez, who is a poor stinking Gallego that would steal from his own mother that Bee-lips has got indicted again so he can defend him.

"Mr. Simmons speaks good Spanish," the Cuban said.

"He's got an education."

"Can you navigate?"

"I can go and I can come."

"You're a fisherman?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"How do you fish with one arm?" the big faced one asked.

“You just fish twice as fast,” Harry told him. “Did you want to see me about anything else?”

“No.”

They were all talking Spanish together. “Then I’ll go,” said Harry.

“I’ll let you know about the boat,” Bee-lips told Harry.

“There’s some money got to be put up,” Harry said.

“We’ll do that tomorrow.”

“Well, good night,” Harry told them.

“Good night,” said the young pleasant speaking one. The big faced one didn’t say anything. There were two others with faces like Indians that hadn’t said anything at all any of the time except to talk in Spanish to the big faced one.

“I’ll see you later on,” Bee-lips said.

“Where?”

“At Freddy’s.”

We went out and through the kitchen again and Freda said, “How’s Marie, Harry?”

“She’s fine now,” Harry told her. “She’s feeling good now,” and we went out the door. We got in the car and he drove back to the boulevard and didn’t say anything at all. He was thinking about something all right.

“Should I drop you home?”

“All right.”

“You live out on the county road now?”

“Yes. What about the trip?”

“I don’t know,” he said. “I don’t know whether there’s going to be any trip, See you tomorrow.”

He drops me in front of where we live and I go on in and I haven’t got the door open before my old woman is giving me hell for staying out and drinking and being late to the meal. I ask her how I can drink with no money and she says I must be running a credit. I ask her who she thinks will give me credit when I’m

working on the relief and she says to keep my rummy breath away from her and sit down to the table. So I sit down. The kids are all gone to the diamond ball game and I sit there at the table and she brings the supper and won't speak to me.

Chapter Ten

Harry

I don't want to fool with it but what choice have I got? They don't give you any choice now. I can let it go; but what will the next thing be? I didn't ask for any of this and if you've got to do it you've got to do it. Probably I shouldn't take Albert. He's dumb but he's straight and he's a good man in a boat. He doesn't spook too easy but I don't know whether I ought to take him. But I can't take no rummy nor no nigger. I got to have somebody I can depend on. T f we make it I'll see he gets a share. But I can't tell him or he wouldn't go into it and I got to have somebody by me. It would be better alone, anything is better alone but I don't think I can handle it alone. It would be much better alone. Albert is better off if he don't know anything about it. The only thing is Bee-lips. There's Bee-lips that will know about everything. Still they must have thought about that. They must figure on that. Do you suppose Bee-lips is so dumb he won't know that's what they will do? I wonder. Of course maybe that isn't what they figure to do. Maybe they aren't going to do any such thing. But it's natural that's what they would do and I heard that word. If they do it they'll have to do it just when it closes or they'll have the coast guard plane down from Miami. It's dark now at six. She can't fly it down under an hour. Once it's dark they're all right. Well, if I'm going to carry them I got to figure out about the boat. She won't be hard to get out but if I take her out tonight and they find she's gone they'll maybe find her. Anyway there will be a big fuss. Tonight's the only time I've got to get her out though. I can take her out with the tide and I can hide her. I can see what she needs if she needs anything, if they've taken

off anything. But I got to fill gas and water. I got a hell of a busy night all right. Then when I've got her hid Albert will have to bring them in a speed boat. Maybe Walton's. I can hire her. Or Bee-lips can hire her. That's better. Bee-lips can help me get the boat out tonight. Bee-lips is the one. Because sure as hell they've figured about Bee-lips. They've got to have figured about Bee-lips. Suppose they figure about me and Albert. Did any of them look like sailors? Did any of them seem like they were sailors? Let me think? Maybe. The pleasant one, maybe. Possibly him, that young one. I have to find out about that because if they figure on doing without Albert or me from the start there's no way. Sooner or later they will figure on us. But in the Gulf you got time. And I'm figuring all the time. I've got to think right all the time. I can't make a mistake. Not a mistake. Not once. Well, I got something to think about now all right. Something to do and something to think about besides wondering what the hell's going to happen. Besides wondering what's going to happen to the whole damn thing. Once they put it up. Once you're playing for it. Once you got a chance. Instead of just watching it all go to hell. With no boat to make a living with. That Bee-lips. He don't know what he's into. He ain't got any idea what this is going to be like. I hope he shows up pretty soon down at Freddy's. I got plenty to do tonight. I better get something to eat.

Chapter Eleven

It was about nine-thirty when Bee-lips came into the place. You could see they had given him plenty out at Richard's because when he drinks it makes him cocky and he came in plenty cocky.

"Well, big shot," he says to Harry.

"Don't big shot me," Harry told him.

"I want to talk to you, big shot."

"Where? Back in your office?" Harry asked him.

"Yes, back there. Anybody back there, Freddy?"

"Not since that law. Say, how long are they going to have that six o'clock business?"

"Why don't you retain me to do something about it?" Bee-lips says.

"Retain you hell," Freddy tells him. And the two of them go back there where the booths and the cases with the empty bottles are.

There was one electric light on in the ceiling and Harry looked in all the booths where it was dark and saw there was no one.

"Well," he said.

"They want it for late day after tomorrow afternoon," Bee-lips told him.

"What they going to do?"

"You speak Spanish," Bee-lips said.

"You didn't tell them that though?"

"No. I'm your pal. You know that."

"You'd rat on your own mother."

"Cut it out. Look at what I'm letting you in on."

"When did you get tough?"

"Listen, I need the money. I've got to get out of here. I'm all washed up here. You know that, Harry."

"Who don't know that?"

"You know how they've been financing this revolution with kidnapping and the rest of it."

"I know."

"This is the same sort of thing. They're doing it for a good cause."

"Yeah. But this is here. This is where you were born. You know everybody works there."

"Nothing's going to happen to anybody."

"With those guys?"

"I thought you had *cojones*."

"I got *cojones*. Don't you worry about my *cojones*. But I'm figuring on keeping on living here."

"I'm not," Bee-lips said.

Jesus, thought Harry. He's said it himself.

"I'm going to get out," Bee-lips said.

"When are you going to get the boat out?"

"Tonight."

"Who's going to help you?"

"You."

"Where you going to put her?"

"Where I always put her."

There was nothing difficult about getting the boat out. It was as simple as Harry had figured it. The night watchman made his rounds on the hour and the rest of the time he was at the outer gate of the old Navy Yard. They came into the basin in a skiff, cut her loose on the ebb tide and she went out herself with the skiff towing her. Outside, while she drifted in the channel, Harry checked the motors and found all they had done was disconnect the distributor heads. He checked the gas and found she had close to a hundred

and fifty gallons. They hadn't syphoned any out of the tanks and she had what he had left coming across that last time. He had filled her up before they started and she had burned very little because they had to come across so slow in the heavy seas.

"I've got gas at the house in the tank," he told Bee-lips. "I can take one load of demijohns out with me in the car and Albert can bring another if we need it. I'm going to put her up in the creek right where it crosses the road. They can come out in a car."

"They wanted you to be right at the Porter Dock."

"How can I lay there with this boat?"

"You can't. But I don't think they'll want to do any car driving."

"Well, we'll put her there tonight and I can fill and do what needs to be done and then shift her. You can hire a speed boat to bring them out. I got to put her up there now. I got plenty to do. You scull in and drive out to the bridge and pick me up. I'll be on the road there in about two hours. I'll leave her and come out to the road."

"I'll pick you up," Bee-lips told him, and Harry with the motors throttled down so that she moved quietly through the water, swung her around and towed the skiff close in to where the riding light of the cable schooner showed. He threw the clutches out and held the skiff while Bee-lips got in.

"In about two hours," he said.

"All right," said Bee-lips.

Sitting on the steering seat, moving ahead slowly in the dark, keeping well out from the lights at the head of the docks, Harry thought, Bee-lips is doing some work for his money all right. Wonder how much he thinks he is going to get? I wonder how he ever hooked up with those guys. There's a smart kid who had a good chance once. He's a good lawyer, too. But it made me cold to hear him say it himself. He put his mouth on his own self all right. It's funny how a man can mouth something. When I heard him mouth himself it scared me.

Chapter Twelve

When he came in the house he did not turn on the light but took off his shoes in the hall and went up the bare stairs in his stocking feet. He undressed and got into bed wearing only his undershirt, before his wife woke. In the dark she said, “Harry?” and he said, “Go to sleep, old woman.”

“Harry, what’s the matter?”

“Going to make a trip.”

“Who with?”

“Nobody. Albert maybe.”

“Whose boat?”

“I got the boat again.”

“When?”

“Tonight.”

“You’ll go to jail, Harry.”

“Nobody knows I’ve got her.”

“Where is she?”

“Hid.”

Lying still in the bed he felt her lips on his face and searching for him and then her hand on him and he rolled over against her close.

“Do you want to?”

“Yes. Now.”

“I was asleep. Do you remember when we’d do it asleep?”

“Listen, do you mind the arm? Don’t it make you feel funny?”

“You’re silly. I like it. Any that’s you I like. Put it across there. Put it along there. Go on. I like it, true.”

“It’s like a flipper on a loggerhead.”

“You ain’t no loggerhead. Do they really do it three days? Coot for three days?”

“Sure. Listen, be quiet. We’ll wake the girls.”

“They don’t know what I’ve got. They won’t never know what I’ve got. Ah, Harry. That’s it. Ah, you honey.”

“Wait.”

“I don’t want no wait. Come on. That’s it. That’s where. Listen, did you ever do it with a nigger wench?”

“Sure.”

“What’s it like?”

“Like nurse shark.”

“You’re funny. Harry, I wish you didn’t have to go. I wish you didn’t ever have to go. Who’s the best you ever did it with?”

“You.”

“You lie. You always lie to me. There. There. There.”

“No. You’re the best.”

“I’m old.”

“You’ll never be old.”

“I’ve had that thing.”

“That don’t make no difference when a woman’s any good.”

“Go ahead. Go ahead now. Put the stump there. Hold it there. Hold it. Hold it now. Hold it.”

“We’re making too much noise.”

“We’re whispering.”

“I got to get out before it’s daylight.”

“You go to sleep. I’ll get you up. When you come back we’ll have a time. We’ll go to a hotel up in Miami like we used to. Just like we used to. Someplace where they never seen either of us. Why couldn’t we go to New Orleans?”

“Maybe,” Harry said. “Listen Marie, I got to go to sleep now.”

“We’ll go to New Orleans?”

“Why not? Only I got to go to sleep.”

“Go to sleep. You’re my big honey. Go on to sleep. I’ll wake you. Don’t you worry.”

He went to sleep with the stump of his arm out wide on the pillow, and she lay for a long time looking at him. She could see his face in the street light through the window. I’m lucky, she was thinking. Those girls. They don’t know what they’ll get. I know what I’ve got and what I’ve had. I’ve been a lucky woman. Him saying like a loggerhead. I’m glad it was a arm and not a leg. I wouldn’t like him to have lost a leg. Why’d he have to lose that arm? It’s funny though, I don’t mind it. Anything about him I don’t mind. I’ve been a lucky woman. There ain’t no other men like that. People ain’t never tried them don’t know. I’ve had plenty of them. I’ve been lucky to have him. Do you suppose those turtles feel like we do? Do you suppose all that time they feel like that? Or do you suppose it hurts the she? I think of the damndest things. Look at him, sleeping just like a baby. I better stay awake so as to call him. Christ, I could do that all night if a man was built that way. I’d like to do it and never sleep. Never, never, no, never. No, never, never, never. Well, think of that, will you. Me at my age. I ain’t old. He said I was still good. Forty-five ain’t old. I’m two years older than him. Look at him sleep. Look at him asleep there like a kid.

Two hours before it was daylight they were out at the gas tank in the garage filling and corking demijohns and putting them in the back of the car. Harry wore a hook strapped to his right arm and shifted and lifted the wicker-covered demijohns handily.

“You don’t want no breakfast?”

“When I come back.”

“Don’t you want your coffee?”

“You got it?”

“Sure. I put it on when we came out.”

“Bring it out.”

She brought it out and he drank it in the dark sit- ting at the wheel of the car. She took the cup and put it on the shelf in the

garage.

"I'm coming with you to help you handle the jugs," she said.

"All right," he told her and she got in beside him, a big woman, long legged, big handed, big hipped, still handsome, a hat pulled down over her bleached blonde hair. In the dark and the cold of the morning they drove out the county road through the mist that hung heavy over the flat.

"What you worried about, Harry?"

"I don't know. I'm just worried. Listen, are you letting your hair grow out?"

"I thought I would. The girls have been after me."

"The hell with them. You keep it like it is."

"Do you really want me to?"

"Yes," he said. "That's the way I like it."

"You don't think I look too old?"

"You look better than any of them."

"I'll fix it up then. I can make it blonder if you like it."

"What have the girls got to say about what you do?" Harry said. "They got no business to bother you."

"You know how they are. You know young girls are that way. Listen, if you make a good trip, we'll go to New Orleans, should we?"

"Miami."

"Well, Miami anyway. And we'll leave them here."

"I got some trip to make first."

"You aren't worried, are you?"

"No."

"You know I lay awake almost four hours just thinking about you."

"You're some old woman."

"I can think about you any time and get excited."

"Well, we got to fill this gas now," Harry told her.

Chapter Thirteen

At ten o'clock in the morning in Freddy's place Harry was standing in against the bar with four or five others, and two customs men had just left. They had asked him about the boat and he had said he did not know anything about it.

"Where were you last night?" one of them asked.

"Here and at home."

"How late were you here?"

"Until the place shut."

"Anybody see you here?"

"Plenty of people," Freddy said.

"What's the matter?" Harry asked them. "Do you think I'd steal my own boat? What would I do with it? "

"I just asked you where you were," the Customs House officer said. "Don't get plugged."

"I'm not plugged," Harry said. "I was plugged back when they seized the boat without any proof she carried liquor."

"There was an affidavit sworn to," the customs man said. "It wasn't my affidavit. You know the man that made it."

"All right," said Harry. "Only don't say I'm plugged at you asking me. I'd rather you had her tied up. Then I got a chance to get her back. What chance I got if she's stolen?"

"None, I guess," said the customs man.

"Well, go peddle your papers," Harry said.

"Don't get snotty," said the customs man, "or I'll see you get something to be snotty about."

"After fifteen years," said Harry.

"You haven't been snotty fifteen years."

"No, and I haven't been in jail either."

"Well, don't be snotty or you will be."

"Take it easy," Harry said. Just then this goofy Cuban that drives a taxi came in with a fellow from the plane and Big Rodger says to him,

"Hayzooz, they tell me you had a baby."

"Yes, sir," says Hayzooz very proudly.

"When did you get married?" Rodger asked him. "Lasta month. Montha for last. You come the wedding?"

"No," said Rodger. "I didn't come the wedding."

"You missa something," said Hayzooz. "You missa damn fine wedding. Whas a matta you no come?"

"You didn't ask me."

"Oh, yes," said Hayzooz. "I forget. I didn't ask you. . . . You get what you want?" he asked the stranger.

"Yes. I think so. Is that the best price you have on Bacardi?"

"Yes, sir," Freddy told him. "That's the real carta del oro."

"Listen Hayzooz, what makes you think that's your baby?" Rodger asks him. "That's not your baby."

"What you mean not my baby? What you mean? By God, I no let you talk like that! What you mean not my baby? You buy the cow you no get the calf? That's my baby. My God, yes. My baby. Belong to me. Yes, *sir*!"

He goes out with the stranger and the bottle of Bacardi and the laugh is on Rodger all right. That Hayzooz is a character all right. Him and that other Cuban, Sweetwater.

Just then in comes Bee-lips the lawyer, and he says to Harry, "The customs just went out to take your boat."

Harry looked at him and you could see the murder come in his face. Bee-lips went on in this same tone without any expression in it. "Somebody saw it in the mangroves from the top of one of those

high WP A trucks and called up from where they're building the camp out at Boca Chica to the Customs House. I just saw Herman Frederichs. He told me."

Harry didn't say anything, but you could see the killing go out of his face and his eyes came open natural again. Then he said to Bee-lips, "You hear everything, don't you?"

"I thought you'd like to know," Bee-lips said in that same expressionless voice.

"It's none of my concern," Harry said. "They ought to take better care of a boat than that."

The two of them stood there at the bar and neither one said anything until Big Rodger and the two or three others had drifted out. Then they went in the back.

"You're poison," Harry said. "Everything you touch is poison."

"Is it my fault a truck could see it? You picked the place. You hid your own boat."

"Shut up," Harry said. "Did they ever have high trucks like that before? That's the last chance I had to make any honest money. That's the last chance I got to go in a boat where there's any money."

"I let you know as soon as it happened."

"You're like a buzzard."

"Cut it out," Bee-lips said. "They want to go late this afternoon now."

"The hell they do."

"They're getting nervous about something."

"What time do they want to go?"

"Five o'clock."

"I'll get a boat. I'll carry them to hell."

"That isn't a bad idea."

"Don't mouthe that now. Keep your mouth off my business."

"Listen, you big murdering slob," said Bee-lips, "I try to help you out and get you in on something—"

“And all you do is poison me. Shut up. You’re poison to anybody that ever touched you.”

“Cut it out, you bully.”

“Take it easy,” Harry said. “I got to think. All I’ve done is think one thing out and I got it thought out and now I got to think out something else.”

“Why don’t you let me help you?”

“You come here at twelve o’clock and bring that money to put up for the boat.”

As they came out Albert came up to the place and went up to Harry.

“I’m sorry, Albert, I can’t use you,” Harry said. He had thought it out that far already.

“I’d go cheap,” Albert said.

“I’m sorry,” Harry said. “I got no need for you now.”

“You won’t get a good man for what I’ll go for,” Albert said.

“I’m going by myself.”

“You don’t want to make a trip like that alone,” Albert said.

“Shut up,” said Harry. “What do you know about it? Do they teach you my business on the relief?”

“Go to hell,” said Albert.

“Maybe I will,” said Harry. Anybody looking at him could tell he was thinking plenty fast and he did not want to be bothered.

“I’d like to go,” Albert said.

“I can’t use you,” Harry said. “Let me alone, will you?”

Albert went out and Harry stood there at the bar looking at the nickel machine, the two dime machines and the quarter machine and at the picture of Custer’s Last Stand on the wall as though he’d never seen them.

“That was a good one Hayzooz told Big Rodger about the baby, wasn’t it?” Freddy said to him, putting some coffee glasses in the bucket of soapy water.

“Give me a package of Chesterfields,” Harry said to him. He held

the package under the flap of his arm and opened it at one corner, took a cigarette out and put it in his mouth, then dropped the package in his pocket and lit the cigarette.

"What shape's your boat in, Freddy?" he asked.

"I just had her on the ways," Freddy said. "She's in good shape."

"Do you want to charter her?"

"What for?"

"For a trip across."

"Not unless they put up the value of her."

"What's she worth?"

"Twelve hundred dollars."

"I'll charter her," Harry said. "Will you trust me on her?"

"No," Freddy told him.

"I'll put up the house as security."

"I don't want your house. I want twelve hundred bucks up."

"All right," Harry said.

"Bring around the money," Freddy told him.

"When Bee-lips comes in, tell him to wait for me," Harry said and went out.

Chapter Fourteen

Out at the house Marie and the girls were having lunch.

"Hello Daddy," said the oldest girl. "Here's Daddy."

"What have you got to eat?" Harry asked.

"We've got a steak," Marie said.

"Somebody said they stole your boat, Daddy."

"They found her," Harry said.

Marie looked at him.

"Who found her?" she asked.

"The Customs."

"Oh, Harry," she said, full of pity.

"Isn't it better they found her, Daddy?" asked the second one of the girls.

"Don't talk while you're eating," Harry told her. "Where's my dinner? What you waiting for?"

"I'm bringing it."

"I'm in a hurry," Harry said. "You girls eat up and get out. I got to talk to your mother."

"Can we have some money to go to the show this aft, Daddy?"

"Why don't you go swimming. That's free."

"Oh, Daddy, it's too cold to go swimming, and we want to go to the show."

"All right," said Harry. "All right."

When the girls were out of the room he said to Marie, "Cut it up, will you?"

"Sure, Honey."

She cut the meat as for a small boy.

“Thanks,” Harry said. “I’m a hell of a goddamn nuisance, ain’t I? Those girls aren’t much, are they?”

“No, Hon.”

“Funny we couldn’t get no boys.”

“That’s because you’re such a man. That way it always comes out girls.”

“I ain’t no hell of a man,” Harry said. “But listen, I’m going on a hell of a trip.”

“Tell me about the boat.”

“They saw it from a truck. A high truck.”

“Shucks.”

“Worse than that. Shit.”

“Aw, Harry, don’t talk like that in the house.”

“You talk worse than that in bed sometimes.”

“That’s different. I don’t like to hear shit at my own table.”

“Oh, shit.”

“Aw, Honey, you feel bad,” Marie said. “No,” said Harry. “I’m just thinking.”

“Well, you think it out. I got confidence in you.” “I got confidence. That’s the only thing I have got.”

“Do you want to tell me about it?”

“No. Only don’t worry no matter what you hear.”

“I won’t worry.”

“Listen, Marie. Go on up to the upstairs trap and bring me the Thompson gun and look in that wooden box with the shells and see all the clips are filled.”

“Don’t take that.”

“I got to.”

“Do you want any boxes of shells?”

“No. I can’t load any clips. I got four clips.”

“Honey, you aren’t going on that kind of a trip?”

“I’m going on a bad trip.”

“Oh, God,” she said. “Oh, God, I wish you didn’t have to do these things.”

“Go on and get it and bring it down here. Get me some coffee.”

“O.K.,” said Marie. She leaned over the table and kissed him on the mouth.

“Leave me alone,” Harry said. “I got to think.”

He sat at the table and looked at the piano, the sideboard and the radio, the picture of September Morn, and the pictures of the cupids holding bows behind their heads, the shiny, real-oak table and the shiny real-oak chairs and the curtains on the windows and he thought, What chance have I to enjoy my home? Why am I back to worse than where I started? It’ll all be gone too if I don’t play this right. The hell it will. I haven’t got sixty bucks left outside of the house, but I’ll get a stake out of this. Those damn girls. That’s all that old woman and I could get with what we’ve got. Do you suppose the boys in her went before I knew her?

“Here it is,” said Marie, carrying it by the web sling strap. “They’re all full.”

“I got to go,” Harry said. He lifted the chunky weight of the dismounted gun in its oil-stained, canvas-web case. “Put it under the front seat of the car.”

“Good-bye,” Marie said.

“Good-bye, old woman.”

“I won’t worry. But please take care of yourself.”

“Be good.”

“Aw, Harry,” she said and held him tight against her.

“Let me go. I ain’t got no time.”

He patted her on the back with his arm stump.

“You and your loggerhead flipper.” she said. “Oh, Harry. Be careful.”

“I got to go. Good-bye, old woman.”

“Good-bye, Harry.”

She watched him go out of the house, tall, wide- shouldered,

flat-backed, his hips narrow, moving, still, she thought, like some kind of animal, easy and swift and not old yet, he moves so light and smooth-like, she thought, and when he got in the car she saw him blonde, with the sunburned hair, his face with the broad mongol cheek bones, and the narrow eyes, the nose broken at the bridge, the wide mouth and the round jaw, and getting in the car he grinned at her and she began to cry. “His goddamn face,” she thought. “Every time I see his goddamn face it makes me want to cry.”

Chapter Fifteen

There were three tourists at the bar at Freddy's and Freddy was serving them. One was a very tall, thin, wide-shouldered man, in shorts, wearing thick-lensed spectacles, tanned, with small closely trimmed sandy mustache. The woman with him had her blonde curly hair cut short like a man's, a bad complexion, and the face and build of a lady wrestler. She wore shorts, too.

"Oh, nerts to you," she was saying to the third tourist, who had a rather swollen reddish face, a rusty-colored mustache, a white cloth hat with a green celluloid visor, and a trick of talking with a rather extraordinary movement of his lips as though he were eating something too hot for comfort.

"How charming," said the green-visored man. "I'd never heard the expression actually used in conversation. I thought it was an obsolete phrase, something one saw in print in—er—the funny papers but never heard."

"Nerts, nerts, double nerts to you," said the lady wrestler lady in a sudden access of charm, giving him the benefit of her pimpled profile.

"How beautiful," said the green-visored man.

"You put it so prettily. Isn't it from Brooklyn originally?"

"You mustn't mind her. She's my wife," the tall tourist said. "Have you two met?"

"Oh, nerts to him and double nerts to meeting him," said the wife. "How do you do?"

"Not so badly," the green-visored man said. "How do *you* do?"

"She does marvellously," the tall one said. "You ought to see

her."

Just then Harry came in and the tall tourist's wife said, "Isn't he wonderful? That's what I want. Buy me that, Papa."

"Can I speak to you?" Harry said to Freddy.

"Certainly. Go right ahead and say anything you like," the tall tourist's wife said.

"Shut up, you whore," Harry said. "Come in the back, Freddy."

In the back was Bee-lips, waiting at the table.

"Hello, Big Boy," he said to Harry.

"Shut up," said Harry.

"Listen," Freddy said. "Cut it out. You can't get away with that. You can't call my trade names like that. You can't call a lady a whore in a decent place like this.

"A whore," said Harry. "Hear what she said to me?"

"Well, anyway, don't call her a name like that to her face."

"All right. You got the money?"

"Of course," said Bee-lips. "Why wouldn't I have the money? Didn't I say I'd have the money?"

"Let's see it."

Bee-lips handed it over. Harry counted ten hundred-dollar bills and four twenties.

"It should be twelve hundred."

"Less my commission," said Bee-lips.

"Come on with it."

"No."

"Come on."

"Don't be silly."

"You miserable little crut."

"You big bully," Bee-lips said. "Don't try to strong arm it away from me because I haven't got it here."

"I see," said Harry. "I should have thought of that. Listen Freddy. You've known me a long time. I know she's worth twelve hundred. This is a hundred and twenty short. Take it and take a

chance on the hundred and twenty and the charter."

"That's three hundred and twenty dollars," Freddy said. It was a painful sum for him to name as a risk, and he sweated while he thought about it.

"I got a car and a radio in the house that's good for it."

"I can make out a paper on that," Bee-lips said. "I don't want any paper," Freddy said. He sweat again and his voice was hesitant. Then he said, "All right. I'll take a chance. But for Christ's sake be careful with the boat, will you Harry?"

"Like it was my own."

"You lost your own," said Freddy, still sweating, his suffering now intensified by that memory.

"I'll take care of her."

"I'll put the money in my box in the bank," Freddy said.

Harry looked at Bee-lips.

"That's a good place," he said, and grinned.

"Bartender," someone called from the front.

"That's you," Harry said.

"Bartender," came the voice again.

Freddy went out to the front.

"That man insulted me," Harry could hear the high voice saying, but he was talking to Bee-lips.

"I'll be tied up to the dock there at the front of the street. It isn't half a block."

"All right."

"That's all."

"All right, Big Shot."

"Don't you big shot me."

"However you like."

"I'll be there from four o'clock on."

"Anything else?"

"They got to take me by force, see? I know nothing about it. I'm just working on the engine. I got nothing aboard to make a trip. I've

hired her from Freddy to go charter fishing. They've got to hold a gun on me to make me start her and they've got to cut loose the lines."

"What about Freddy? You didn't hire her to go fishing from him."

"I'm going to tell Freddy."

"You better not."

"I'm going to."

"You better not."

"Listen, I've done business with Freddy since during the war. Twice I've been partners with him and we never had trouble. You know how much stuff I've handled for him. He's the only son-of-a-bitch in this town I *would* trust."

"I wouldn't trust anybody."

"*You* shouldn't. Not after the experiences you've had with yourself."

"Lay off me."

"All right. Go out and see your friends. What's *your* out?"

"They're Cubans. I met them out at the roadhouse. One of them wants to cash a certified check. What's wrong with that?"

"And you don't notice anything?"

"No. I tell them to meet me at the bank."

"Who drives them?"

"Some taxi."

"What's he supposed to think they are, violinists?"

"We'll get one that don't think. There's plenty of them that can't think in this town. Look at Hayzooz."

"Hayzooz is smart. He just talks funny."

"I'll have them call a dumb one."

"Get one hasn't any kids."

"They all got kids. Ever see a taxi driver without kids?"

“You are a goddamn rat.”

“Well, I never killed anybody,” Bee-lips told him.

“Nor you never will. Come on, let’s get out of here. Just being with you makes me feel crummy.”

“Maybe you are crummy.”

“Can you get them from talking?”

“If you don’t paper your mouth.”

“Paper yours then.”

“I’m going to get a drink,” Harry said.

Out in front the three tourists sat on their high stools. As Harry came up to the bar the woman looked away from him to register disgust.

“What will you have?” asked Freddy.

“What’s the lady drinking,” Harry asked.

“A Cuba Libre.”

“Then give me a straight whiskey.”

The tall tourist with the little sandy mustache and the thick-lensed glasses leaned his large, straight-nosed face over toward Harry and said, “Say, what’s the idea of talking that way to my wife?”

Harry looked him up and down and said to Freddy, “What kind of a place you running?”

“What about it?” the tall one said.

“Take it easy,” Harry said to him.

“You can’t pull that with me.”

“Listen,” Harry said. “You came down here to get well and strong, didn’t you? Take it easy.” And he went out.

“I should have hit him, I guess,” the tall tourist said. “What do you think, dear?”

“I wish I was a man,” his wife said.

“You’d go a long way with that build,” the green-visored man said into his beer.

“What did you say,” the tall one asked.

“I said you could find out his name and address and write him a letter telling him what you think of him.”

“Say, what’s your name, anyway? What are you doing, kidding ,me?”

“Just call me Professor MacWalsey.”

“My name’s Laughton,” the tall one said. “I’m a writer.”

“I’m glad to meet you,” Professor MacWalsey said. “Do you write often?”

The tall man looked around him. “Let’s get out of here, dear,” he said. “Everybody is either insulting or nuts.”

“It’s a strange place,” said Professor MacWalsey. “Fascinating, really. They call it the Gibraltar of America and it’s three hundred and seventy-five miles south of Cairo, Egypt. But this place is the only part of it I’ve had time to see yet. It’s a fine place though.”

“I see you’re a professor all right,” the wife said. “You know, I like you.”

“I like you too, darling,” Professor MacWalsey said. “But I have to go now.”

He got up and went out to look for his bicycle.

“Everybody is nuts here,” the tall man said. “Should we have another drink, dear?”

“I liked the professor,” the wife said. “He had a sweet manner.”

“That other fellow—”

“Oh, he had a beautiful face,” the wife said. “Like a Tartar or something. I wish he hadn’t been insulting. He looked kind of like Ghengis Khan in the face. Gee, he was big.”

“He had only one arm,” her husband said.

“I didn’t notice,” the wife said. “Should we have another drink? I wonder who’ll come in next!”

“Maybe Tamerlane,” the husband said.

“Gee, you’re educated,” the wife said. “But that Ghengis Khan one would do me. Why did the Professor like to hear me say nerts?”

“I don’t know, dear,” Laughton, the writer, said. “I never did.”

“He seemed to like me for what I really am,” the wife said. “My, he was nice.”

“You’ll probably see him again.”

“Any time you come in here you’ll see *him*,” Freddy said. “He lives in here. He’s been here for two weeks now.”

“Who’s the other one who speaks so rude?”

“Him? Oh, he’s a fellow from around here.”

“What does he do?”

“Oh, a little of everything,” Freddy told her.

“He’s a fisherman.”

“How did he lose his arm?”

“I don’t know. He got it hurt some way.”

“Gee, he’s beautiful,” the wife said.

Freddy laughed. “I heard him called a lot of things but I never heard him called that.”

“Don’t you think he has a beautiful face?”

“Take it easy, lady,” Freddy told her. “He’s got a face like a ham with a broken nose on it.”

“My, men are stupid,” the wife said. “He’s my dream man.”

“He’s a bad-dream man,” Freddy said.

All this time the writer sat there with a sort of stupid look on his face except when he’d look at his wife admiringly. Anyone would have to be a writer or a F.E.R.A. man to have a wife look like that, Freddy thought. God, isn’t she awful?

Just then in came Albert.

“Where’s Harry?”

“Down at the dock.”

“Thanks,” said Albert.

He went out and the wife and the writer kept on sitting there and Freddy stood there worrying about the boat and thinking how his legs hurt from standing up all day. He had put a grating over the cement but it didn’t seem to do much good. His legs ached all the time. Still he was doing a good business, as good as anybody in

town and with less overhead. That woman was goofy all right. And what kind of a man was it would pick out a woman like that to live with? Not even with your eyes shut, thought Freddy. Not with a borrowed. Still they were drinking mixed drinks. Expensive drinks. That was something.

"Yes, sir," he said. "Right away."

A tanned-faced, sandy-haired, well-built man wearing a striped fisherman's shirt and khaki shorts came in with a very pretty dark girl who wore a thin, white wool sweater and dark blue slacks.

"If it isn't Richard Gordon," said Laughton, standing up, "with the lovely Miss Helen."

"Hello, Laughton," said Richard Gordon. "Did you see anything of a rummy professor around here?"

"He just went out," said Freddy.

"Do you want a vermouth, sweetheart?" Richard Gordon asked his wife.

"If you do," she said. Then said. "Hello," to the two Laughtons. "Make mine two parts of French to one Italian, Freddy."

She sat on a high stool with her legs tucked under her and looked out at the street. Freddy looked at her admiringly. He thought she was the prettiest stranger in Key West that winter. Prettier even than the famous beautiful Mrs. Bradley. Mrs. Bradley was getting a little big. This girl had a lovely Irish face, dark hair that curled almost to her shoulders and smooth clear skin. Freddy looked at her brown hand holding the glass.

"How's the work?" Laughton asked Richard Gordon.

"I'm going all right," Gordon said. "How are you doing?"

"James won't work," Mrs. Laughton said. "He just drinks."

"Say, who is this Professor MacWalsey?" Laughton asked.

"Oh, he's some sort of professor of economics I think, on a sabbatical year or something. He's a friend of Helen's."

"I like him," said Helen Gordon.

"I like him, too," said Mrs. Laughton.

“I liked him first,” Helen Gordon said happily.

“Oh, you can have him,” Mrs. Laughton said. “You good little girls always get what you want.”

“That’s what makes us so good,” said Helen Gordon.

“I’ll have another vermouth,” said Richard Gordon. “Have a drink?” he asked the Laughtons.

“Why not,” said Laughton. “Say, are you going to that big party the Bradleys are throwing tomorrow?”

“Of course he is,” said Helen Gordon.

“I like her, you know,” said Richard Gordon. “She interests me both as a woman and as a social phenomenon.”

“Gee,” said Mrs. Laughton. “You can talk as educated as the Professor.”

“Don’t strut your illiteracy, dear,” said Laughton.

“Do people go to bed with a social phenomenon?” asked Helen Gordon, looking out the door.

“Don’t talk rot,” said Richard Gordon.

“I mean is it part of the homework of a writer?” Helen asked.

“A writer has to know about everything,” Richard Gordon said. “He can’t restrict his experience to conform to Bourgeois standards.”

“Oh,” said Helen Gordon. “And what does a writer’s wife do?”

“Plenty, I guess,” Mrs. Laughton said. “Say, you ought to have seen the man who was just in here and insulted me and James. He was terrific.”

“I should have hit him,” Laughton said.

“He was really terrific,” said Mrs. Laughton.

“I’m going home,” said Helen Gordon. “Are you coming, Dick?”

“I thought I’d stay down town a while,” Richard Gordon said.

“Yes?” said Helen Gordon, looking in the mirror behind Freddy’s head.

“Yes,” Richard Gordon said.

Freddy, looking at her, figured that she was going to cry. He

hoped it wouldn't happen in the place.

"Don't you want another drink?" Richard Gordon asked her.

"No." She shook her head.

"Say, what's the matter with you?" asked Mrs. Laughton. "Aren't you having a good time?"

"A dandy time," said Helen Gordon. "But I think I'd better go home just the same."

"I'll be back early," Richard Gordon said.

"Don't bother," she told him. She went out. She hadn't cried. She hadn't found John MacWalsey either.

Chapter Sixteen

Down at the dock Harry Morgan had driven up alongside of where the boat lay, seen there was no one around, lifted the front seat of his car, skidded the flat, web, oil-heavy case out and dropped it down into the cockpit of the launch.

He got in himself and opened the engine hatch and put the machine gun case below out of sight. He turned on the gas valves and started both engines. The starboard engine ran smoothly after a couple of minutes, but the port engine missed on the second and fourth cylinders and he found the plugs were cracked, looked for some new plugs, but couldn't find them.

"Got to get plugs and fill gas," he thought.

Below with the engines, he opened the machine gun case and fitted the stock to the gun. He found two pieces of fan belting and four screws, and cutting slits in the belting rigged a sling to hold the gun under the cockpit floor to the left of the hatch; just over the port engine. It lay there, cradled easily, and he shoved a clip from the four held in the web pockets in the case up into the gun. Kneeling between the two engines he reached up to take the gun. There were only two movements to make. First unhook the strap of belting that passed around the receiver just behind the bolt. Then pull the gun out of the other loop. He tried it and it came easily one-handed. He pushed the little lever all the way over from semi-automatic to automatic and made sure the safety was on. Then he fastened it up again. He could not figure out where to put the extra clips; so he shoved the case under a gas tank below, where he could reach it, with the butts of the clips lying toward his hand. If I go

down a time first after we're underway, I can put a couple in my pocket, he thought. Be better not to have it on but something might jar the damn thing off.

He stood up. It was a fine clear afternoon, pleasant, not cold, with a light north breeze. It was a nice afternoon all right. The tide was running out and there were two pelicans sitting on the piling at the edge of the channel. A grunt fishing boat, painted dark green, chugged past on the way around to the fish market, the Negro fisherman sitting in the stern holding the tiller. Harry looked out across the water, smooth with the wind blowing with the tide, gray blue in the afternoon sun, out to the sandy island formed when the channel was dredged where the shark camp had been located. There were white gulls flying over the island.

"Be a pretty night," Harry thought. "Be a nice night to cross."

He was sweating a little from being down around the engines, and he straightened up and wiped his face with a piece of waste.

There was Albert on the dock.

"Listen, Harry," he said. "I wish you'd carry me."

"What's the matter with you now?"

"They're only going to give us three days a week on the relief now. I just heard about it this morning. I got to do something."

"All right," said Harry. He had been thinking again. "All right."

"That's good," said Albert. "I was afraid to go home to see my old woman. She gave me hell this noon like it was me had laid off the relief."

"What's the matter with your old woman?" asked Harry cheerfully. "Why don't you smack her?"

"You smack her," Albert said. "I'd like to hear what she'd say. She's some old woman to talk."

"Listen, AI," Harry told him. "Take my car and this and go around to the Marine Hardware and get six metric plugs like this one. Then go get a 20-cent piece of ice and a half a dozen mullets. Get two cans of coffee, four cans of cornbeef, two loaves of bread,

some sugar and two cans of condensed milk. Stop at the Sinclair and tell them to come down here and put in a hundred and fifty gallons. Get back as soon as you can and change the number two and the number four plugs in the port engine counting back from the flywheel. Tell them I'll be back to pay for the gas. They can wait or find me at Freddy's. Can you remember all that? We're taking a party out tarponing and fishing them tomorrow."

"It's too cold for tarpon," Albert said.

"The party says no," Harry told him.

"Hadn't I better get a dozen mullets?" Albert asked. "In case the jacks tear 'em up? There's plenty jacks now in those channels."

"Well, make it a dozen. But get back inside an hour and have the gas filled."

"Why you want to put in so much gas?"

"We may be running early and late and not have time to fill."

"What's become of those Cubans that wanted to be carried?"

"Haven't heard anything more from them."

"That was a good job."

"This is a good job too. Come on, get going."

"What am I going to be working for?"

"Five bucks a day," said Harry. "If you don't want it don't take it."

"All right," said Albert. "Which plugs was it?"

"The number two and the number four counting back from the flywheel," Harry told him. Albert nodded his head. "I guess I can remember," he said. He got into the car and made a turn in it and went off up the street.

From where Harry stood in the boat he could see the brick and stone building and the front entrance of the First State Trust and Savings Bank. It was just a block down at the foot of the street. He couldn't see the side entrance. He looked at his watch. It was a little after two o'clock. He shut the engine hatch and climbed up on the

dock. Well, now it comes off or it doesn't, he thought. I've done what I can now. I'll go up and see Freddy and then I'll come back and wait. He turned to the right as he left the dock and walked down a back street so that he would not pass the bank.

Chapter Seventeen

In at Freddy's he wanted to tell him about it but he couldn't. There wasn't anybody in the bar and he sat on a stool and wanted to tell him, but it was impossible. As he was ready to tell him he knew Freddy would not stand for it. In the old days, maybe, yes, but not now. Maybe not in the old days either. It wasn't until he thought of telling it to Freddy that he realized how bad it was. I could stay right here, he thought, and there wouldn't be anything. I could stay right here and have a few drinks and get hot and I wouldn't be in it. Except there's my gun on the boat. But nobody knows it's mine except the old woman. I got it in Cuba on a trip the time when I peddled those others. Nobody knows I've got it. I could stay here now and I'd be out of it. But what the hell would they eat on? Where's the money coming from to keep Marie and the girls? I've got no boat, no cash, I got no education. What can a one-armed man work at? All I've got is my *cojones* to peddle. I could stay right here and have say five more drinks and it would all be over. It would be too late then. I could just let it all slide and do nothing.

"Give me a drink" he said to Freddy.

"Sure."

I could sell the house and we could rent until I got some kind of work. What kind of work? No kind of work. I could go down to the bank and squeal now and what would I get? Thanks. Sure. Thanks. One bunch of Cuban government bastards cost me my arm shooting at me with a load when they had no need to and another bunch of U. S. ones took my boat. Now I can give up my home and get

thanks. No thanks. The hell with it, he thought. I got no choice in it.

He wanted to tell Freddy so there would be someone knew what he was doing. But he couldn't tell him because Freddy wouldn't stand for it. He was making good money now. There was nobody much in the daytime, but every night the place was full until two o'clock. Freddy wasn't in a jam. He knew he wouldn't stand for it. I have to do it alone, he thought, with that poor bloody Albert. Christ, he looked hungrier than ever down at the dock. There were Conchs that would starve to death before they'd steal all right. Plenty in this town with their bellies hollering right now. But they'd never make a move. They'd just starve a little every day. They started starving when they were born; some of them.

"Listen, Freddy," he said. "I want a couple of quarts."

"Of what?"

"Bacardi."

"O.K."

"Pull the corks, will you? You know I wanted to charter her to take some Cubans over."

"That's what you said."

"I don't know when they'll be going. Maybe tonight. I haven't heard."

"She's ready to go anytime. You've got a nice night if you cross tonight."

"They said something about going fishing this afternoon."

"She's got tackle on board if the pelicans haven't stole it off her."

"It's still there."

"Well, make a good trip," Freddy said.

"Thanks. Give me another one, will you?"

"Of what?"

"Whiskey."

"I thought you were drinking Bacardi."

"I'll drink that if I get cold going across."

“You’ll cross with this breeze astern all the way,” said Freddy. “I’d like to cross tonight.”

“It’ll be a pretty night all right. Let me have another, will you?”

Just then in came the tall tourist and his wife.

“If it isn’t my dream man,” she said, and sat down on the stool beside Harry.

He took one look at her and stood up.

“I’ll be back, Freddy,” he said. “I’m going down to the boat in case that party wants to go fishing.”

“Don’t go,” the wife said. “Please don’t go.”

“You’re comical,” Harry said to her and he went out.

Down the street Richard Gordon was on his way to the Bradleys’ big winter home. He was hoping Mrs. Bradley would be alone. She would be. Mrs. Bradley collected writers as well as their books but Richard Gordon did not know this yet. His own wife was on her way home walking along the beach. She had not run into John MacWalsey. Perhaps he would come by the house.

Chapter Eighteen

Albert was on board the boat and the gas was loaded.

"I'll start her up and try how those two cylinders hit," Harry said. "You got the things stowed?"

"Yes."

"Cut some baits then."

"You want a wide bait?"

"That's right. For tarpon."

Albert was on the stern cutting baits and Harry was at the wheel warming up the motors when he heard a noise like a motor backfiring. He looked down the street and saw a man come out of the bank. He had a gun in his hand and he came running. Then he was out of sight. Two more men came out carrying leather brief cases and guns in their hands and ran in the same direction. Harry looked at Albert busy cutting baits. The fourth man, the big one, came out of the bank door as he watched, holding a Thompson gun in front of him, and as he backed out of the door the siren in the bank rose in a long breath-holding shriek and Harry saw the gun muzzle jump-jump-jump-jump and heard the bop-bop-bop- bop, small and hollow sounding in the wail of the siren. The man turned and ran, stopping to fire once more at the bank door, and as Albert stood up in the stern saying, "Christ, they're robbing the bank. Christ, what can we do?" Harry heard the Ford taxi coming out of the side street and saw it careening up onto the dock.

There were three Cubans in the back and one beside the driver.

"Where's the boat?" yelled one in Spanish.

"There, you fool," said another.

“That’s not the boat.”

“That’s the captain.”

“Come on. Come on for Christ sake.”

“Get out,” said the Cuban to the driver. “Get your hands up.”

As the driver stood beside the car he put a knife inside his belt and ripping it toward him cut the belt and slit his pants almost to the knee. He yanked the trousers down. “Stand still,” he said. The two Cubans with the valises tossed them into the cockpit of the launch and they all came tumbling aboard.

“Geta going,” said one. The big one with the machine gun poked it into Harry’s back.

“Come on, Cappie,” he said. “Let’s go.”

“Take it easy,” said Harry. “Point that someplace else.”

“Cast off those lines,” the big one said. “You!” to Albert.

“Wait a minute,” Albert said. “Don’t start her. These are the bank robbers.”

The biggest Cuban turned and swung the Thompson gun and held it on Albert. “Hey, don’t! Don’t!” Albert said. “Don’t!”

The burst was so close to his chest that the bullets whocked like three slaps. Albert slid down on his knees, his eyes wide, his mouth open. He looked like he was still trying to say, “Don’t!”

“You don’t need no mate,” the big Cuban said. “You one-armed son-of-a-bitch.” Then in Spanish, “Cut those lines with that fish knife.” And in English, “Come on. Let’s go.”

Then in Spanish, “Put a gun against his back!” and in English, “Come on. Let’s go. I’ll blow your head off.”

“We’ll go,” said Harry.

One of the Indian-looking Cubans was holding a pistol against the side his bad arm was on. The muzzle almost touched the hook.

As he swung her out, spinning the wheel with his good arm, he looked astern to watch the clearance past the piling, and saw Albert on his knees in the stern, his head slipped sidewise now, in a pool of it. On the dock was the Ford taxi, and the fat driver in his

underdrawers, his trousers around his ankles, his hands above his head, his mouth open as wide as Albert's. There was still no one coming down the street.

The pilings of the dock went past as she came out of the basin and then he was in the channel passing the lighthouse dock.

"Come on. Hook her up," the big Cuban said. "Make some time."

"Take that gun away," Harry said. He was thinking, I could run her on Crawfish bar, but sure as hell that Cuban would plug me.

"Make her go," said the big Cuban. Then, in Spanish, "Lie down flat, everybody. Keep the captain covered." He lay down himself in the stern, pulling Albert flat down into the cockpit. The other three all lay flat in the cockpit now. Harry sat on the steering seat. He was looking ahead steering out the channel, past the opening into the sub-base now, with the notice board to yachts and the green blinker, cut away from the jetty, past the fort now, past the red blinker; he looked back. The big Cuban had a green box of shells out of his pocket and was filling clips. The gun lay by his side and he was filling clips without looking at them, filling by feel, looking back over the stern. The others were all looking astern except the one that was watching him. This one, one of the two Indian-looking ones, motioned with his pistol for him to look ahead. No boat had started after them yet. The engines were running smoothly and they were going with the tide. He noticed the heavy slant seawards of the buoy he passed, with the current swirling at its base.

There are two speedboats that could catch us, Harry was thinking. One, Ray's, is running the mail from Matecumbe. Where is the other? I saw her a couple of days ago on Ed. Taylor's ways, he checked. That was the one I thought of having Bee-lips hire. There's two more, he remembered now. One the State Road Department has up along the keys. The other's laid up in the Garrison Bight. How far are we now? He looked back to where the fort was well astern, the red-brick building of the old post office starting to show up above the Navy yard buildings and the yellow hotel building now

dominating the short skyline of the town. There was the cove at the Fort, and the lighthouse showed above the houses that strung out toward the big winter hotel. Four miles anyway, he thought. There they come, he thought. Two white fishing boats were rounding the breakwater and heading out toward him. They can't do ten, he thought. It's pitiful.

The Cubans were chattering in Spanish.

"How fast you going, Cappie?" the big one said, looking back from the stern.

"About twelve," Harry said. "What can those boats do?"

"Maybe ten."

They were all watching them now, even the one who was supposed to keep him, Harry, covered. But what can I do? He thought. Nothing to do yet.

The two white boats got no larger.

"Look at that, Roberto," said the nice-speaking one.

"Where?"

"Look!"

A long way back, so far you could hardly see it, a little spout rose in the water.

"They're shooting at us," the pleasant-speaking one said. "It's silly."

"For Christ's sake," the big-faced one said. "At three miles."

"Four," thought Harry. "All of four."

Harry could see the tiny spouts rise on the calm surface but he could not hear the shots.

"Those Conchs are pitiful," he thought. "They're worse. They're comical."

"What government boat is there, Cappie?" asked the big-faced one looking away from the stern.

"Coast guard."

"What can she make?"

"Maybe twelve."

“Then we’re O.K. now.”

Harry did not answer.

“Aren’t we O.K. then?”

Harry said nothing. He was keeping the rising, widening spire of Sand Key on his left and the stake on little Sand Key shoals showed almost abeam to starboard. In ten more minutes they would be past the reef.

“What’s the matter with you? Can’t you talk?”

“What did you ask me?”

“Is there anything can catch us now?”

“Coast guard plane,” said Harry.

“We cut the telephone wire before we came in town,” the pleasant-speaking one said.

“You didn’t cut the wireless, did you?” Harry asked.

“You think the plane can get here?”

“You got a chance of her until dark,” Harry said.

“What do you think, Cappy?” asked Roberto, the big-faced one.

Harry did not answer.

“Come on, what do you think?”

“What did you let that son of a bitch kill my mate for?” Harry said to the pleasant-speaking one who was standing beside him now looking at the compass course.

“Shut up,” said Roberto. “Kill you, too.”

“How much money you get?” Harry asked the pleasant-speaking one.

“We don’t know. We haven’t counted it yet. It isn’t ours, anyway.”

“I guess not,” said Harry. He was past the light now and he put her on 225°, his regular course for Havana.

“I mean we do it not for ourselves. For a revolutionary organization.”

“You kill my mate for that, too?”

“I am very sorry,” said the boy. “I cannot tell you how badly I

feel about that."

"Don't try," said Harry.

"You see," the boy said, speaking quietly, "this man Roberto is bad. He is a good revolutionary but a bad man. He kills so much in the time of Machado he gets to like it. He thinks it is funny to kill. He kills in a good cause, of course. The best cause." He looked back at Roberto who sat now in one of the fishing chairs in the stern, the Thompson gun across his lap, looking back at the white boats which were, Harry saw, much smaller now.

"What you got to drink?" Roberto called from the stern.

"Nothing," Harry said.

"I drink my own, then," Roberto said. One of the other Cubans lay on one of the seats built over the gas tanks. He looked seasick already. The other was obviously seasick too, but still sitting up.

Looking back, Harry saw a lead-colored boat, now clear of the Fort, coming up on the two white boats.

"There's the coast guard boat," he thought. "She's pitiful too."

"You think the seaplane will come?" the pleasant- spoken boy asked.

"Be dark in half an hour," Harry said. He settled on the steering seat. "What you figure on doing? Killing me?"

"I don't want to," the boy said. "I hate killing."

"What you doing?" Roberto, who sat new with a pint of whiskey in his hand, asked. "Making friends with the captain? What you want to do? Eat at the captain's table?"

"Take the wheel," Harry said to the boy. "See the course? Two twenty-five." He straightened up from the stool and went aft.

"Let me have a drink," Harry said to Roberto. "There's your coast-guard boat but she can't catch us."

He had abandoned anger, hatred and any dignity as luxuries, now, and had started to plan.

"Sure," said Roberto. "She can't catch us. Look at those seasick babies. What you say? You want a drink? You got any other last

wishes, Cappie?"

"You're some kidder," Harry said. He took a long drink.

"Go easy!" Roberto protested. "That's all there is."

"I got some more," Harry told him. "I was just kidding you."

"Don't kid me," said Roberto suspiciously. "Why should I try?"

"What you got?"

"Bacardi."

"Bring it out."

"Take it easy," Harry said. "Why do you get so tough?"

He stepped over Albert's body as he walked forward. As he came to the wheel he looked at the compass. The boy was about twenty-five degrees off and the compass dial was swinging. He's no sailor, Harry thought. That gives me more time. Look at the wake.

The wake ran in two bubbling curves toward where the light, astern now, showed brown, conical and thinly latticed on the horizon. The boats were almost out of sight. He could just see a blur where the wireless masts of the town were. The engines were running smoothly. Harry put his head below and reached for one of the bottles of Bacardi. He went aft with it. At the stern he took a drink, then handed the bottle to Roberto. Standing, he looked down at Albert and he felt sick inside. The poor hungry bastard, he thought.

"What's the matter? He scare you?" the big-faced Cuban asked.

"What you say we put him over?" Harry said.

"No sense to carry him."

"O. K.," said Roberto. "You got good sense."

"Take him under the arms," said Harry. "I'll take the legs." Roberto laid the Thompson gun down on the wide stern and leaning down lifted the body by the shoulders.

"You know the heaviest thing in the world is a dead man," he said. "You ever lift a dead man before, Cappy?"

"No," said Harry. "You ever lift a big dead woman?"

Roberto pulled the body up onto the stern. "You're a tough

fellow," he said. "What do you say we have a drink?"

"Go ahead," said Harry.

"Listen, I'm sorry I killed him," Roberto said. "When I kill you I feel worse."

"Cut out talking that way," Harry said. "What do you want to talk that way for?"

"Come on," said Roberto. "Over he goes."

As they leaned over and slid the body up and over the stern, Harry kicked the machine gun over the edge. It splashed at the same time Albert did, but while Albert turned over twice in the white, churned, bubbling back-suction of the propeller wash before sinking, the gun went straight down.

"That's better, eh?" Roberto said. "Make it shipshape." Then as he saw the gun was gone, "Where is it? What did you do with it?"

"With what?"

"The *ametralladora!*" going into Spanish In excitement.

"The what?"

"You know what."

"I didn't see it."

"You knocked it off the stern. Now I'll kill you, *now*."

"Take it easy," said Harry. "What the hell you going to kill me about?"

"Give me a gun," Roberto said to one of the seasick Cubans in Spanish. "Give me a gun quick!"

Harry stood there, never having felt so tall, never having felt so wide, feeling the sweat trickle from under his armpits, feeling it go down his flanks.

"You kill too much," he heard the seasick Cuban say in Spanish. "You kill the mate. Now you want to kill the captain. Who's going to get us across?"

"Leave him alone," said the other. "Kill him when we get over."

"He knocked the machine gun overboard," Roberto said.

"We got the money. What you want a machine gun for now?

There's plenty of machine guns in Cuba."

"I tell you, you make a mistake if you don't kill him now, I tell you. Give me a gun."

"Oh, shut up. You're drunk. Every time you're drunk you want to kill somebody."

"Have a drink," said Harry looking out across the gray swell of the gulf stream where the round red sun was just touching the water. "Watch that. When she goes all the way under it'll turn bright green."

"The hell with that," said the big-faced Cuban. "You think you got away with something."

"I'll get you another gun," said Harry. "They only cost forty-five dollars in Cuba. Take it easy. You're all right now. There ain't any coastguard plane going to come now."

"I'm going to kill you," Roberto said, looking him over. "You did that on purpose. That's why you got me to lift on that."

"You don't want to kill me," Harry said. "Who's going to take you across?"

"I ought to kill you now."

"Take it easy," said Harry. "I'm going to look at the engines."

He opened the hatch, got down in, screwed down the grease cups on the two stuffing boxes, felt of the motors, and with his hand touched the butt of the Thompson gun. Not yet, he thought. No, better not yet. Christ, that was lucky. What the hell difference does it make to Albert when he's dead? Saves his old woman to bury him. That big-faced bastard. That big- faced murdering bastard. Christ, I'd like to take him now. But I better wait.

He stood up, climbed out and shut the hatch.

"How you doing?" he said to Roberto. He put his hand on the fat shoulder. The big-faced Cuban looked at him and did not say anything.

"Did you see it turn green?" Harry asked.

"The hell with you," Roberto said. He was drunk but he was

suspicious and, like an animal, he knew how wrong something had gone.

"Let me take her a while," Harry said to the boy at the wheel. "What's your name?"

"You can call me Emilio," said the boy.

"Go below and you'll find something to eat," Harry said. "There's bread and cornbeef. Make coffee if you want."

"I don't want any."

"I'll make some later," Harry said. He sat at the wheel, the binnacle light on now, holding her on the point easily in the light following sea, looking out at the night coming on the water. He had no running lights on.

It would be a pretty night to cross, he thought, a pretty night. Soon as the last of that afterglow is gone I've got to work her east. If I don't, we'll sight the glare of Havana in another hour. In two, anyway. Soon as he sees the glare it may occur to that son of a bitch to kill me. That was lucky getting rid of that gun. Damn, that was lucky. Wonder what that Marie's having for supper. I guess she's plenty worried. I guess she's too worried to eat. Wonder how much money those bastards have got. Funny they don't count it. If that ain't a hell of a way to raise money for a revolution. Cubans are a hell of a people.

That's a mean boy, that Roberto. I'll get him tonight. I get him no matter how the rest of it comes out. That won't help that poor damned Albert though. It made me feel bad to dump him like that. I don't know what made me think of it.

He lit a cigarette and smoked in the dark.

I'm doing all right, he thought. I'm doing better than I expected. The kid is a kind of nice kid. I wish I could get those other two on the same side. I wish there was some way to bunch them. Well, I'll have to do the best I can. Easier I can make them take it beforehand the better. Smoother everything goes the better.

"Do you want a sandwich?" the boy asked. "Thanks," said

Harry. “You give one to your partner?”

“He’s drinking. He won’t eat,” the boy said. “What about the others?”

“Seasick,” the boy said.

“It’s a nice night to cross,” Harry said. He noticed the boy did not watch the compass so he kept letting her go off to the east.

“I’d enjoy it,” the boy said. “If it wasn’t for your mate.”

“He was a good fellow,” said Harry. “Did anyone get hurt at the bank?”

“The lawyer. What was his name, Simmons.”

“Get killed?”

“I think so.”

So, thought Harry. Mr. Bee-lips. What the hell did he expect? How could he have thought he wouldn’t get it? That comes from playing at being tough. That comes from being too smart too often. Mr. Bee-lips. Good-byee, Mr. Bee-lips.

“How he come to get killed?”

“I guess you can imagine,” the boy said. “That’s very different from your mate. I feel badly about that. You know he doesn’t mean to do wrong. It’s just what that phase of the revolution has done to him.”

“I guess he’s probably a good fellow,” Harry said, and thought, Listen to what my mouth says. God damn it, my mouth will say anything. But I got to try to make a friend of this boy in case—

“What kind of revolution do you make now?” he asked.

“We are the only true revolutionary party,” the boy said. “We want to do away with all the old politicians, with all the American imperialism that strangles us, with the tyranny of the army. We want to start clean and give every man a chance. We want to end the slavery of the *guajiros*, you know, the peasants, and divide the big sugar estates among the people that work them. But we are not Communists.”

Harry looked up from the compass card at him.

"How you coming on?" he asked.

"We just raise money now for the fight," the boy said. "To do that we have to use means that later we would never use. Also we have to use people we would not employ later. But the end is worth the means. They had to do the same thing in Russia. Stalin was a sort of brigand for many years before the revolution."

He's a radical, Harry thought. That's what he is, a radical.

"I guess you've got a good program," he said, "if you're out to help the working man. I was out on strike plenty times in the old days when we had the cigar factories in Key West. I'd have been glad to do whatever I could if I'd known what kind of outfit you were."

"Lots of people would help us," the boy said. "But because of the state the movement is in at present we can't trust people. I regret the necessity for the present phase very much. I hate terrorism. I also feel very badly about the methods for raising the necessary money. But there is no choice. You do not know how bad things are in Cuba."

"I guess they're plenty bad," Harry said.

"You can't know how bad they are. There is an absolutely murderous tyranny that extends over every little village in the country. Three people cannot be together on the street. Cuba has no foreign enemies and doesn't need any army, but she has an army of twenty-five thousand now, and the army, from the corporals up, suck the blood from the nation. Everyone, even the private soldiers, are out to make their fortunes. Now they have a military reserve with every kind of crook, bully and informer of the old days of Machado in it, and they take anything the army does not bother with. We have to get rid of the army before anything can start. Before we were ruled by clubs. Now we are ruled by rifles, pistols, machine guns, and bayonets."

"It sounds bad," Harry said, steering, and letting her go off to the eastward.

“You cannot realize how bad it is,” the boy said. “I love my poor country and I would do anything, anything to free it from this tyranny we have now. I do things I hate. But I would do things. I hate a thousand times more.”

I want a drink, Harry was thinking. What the hell do I care about his revolution. F— his revolution. To help the working man he robs a bank and kills a fellow works with him and then kills that poor damned Albert that never did any harm. That’s a working man he kills. He never thinks of that. With a family. It’s the Cubans run Cuba. They all double cross each other. They sell each other out. They get what they deserve. The hell with their revolutions. All I got to do is make a living for my family and I can’t do that. Then he tells me about his revolution. The hell with his revolution.

“It must be bad, all right,” he said to the boy.

“Take the wheel a minute, will you? I want to get a drink.”

“Sure,” said the boy. “How should I steer?”

“Two twenty-five,” Harry said.

It was dark now and there was quite a swell this far out in the Gulf Stream. He passed the two seasick Cubans lying out on the seats and went aft to where Roberto sat in the fishing chair. The water was racing past the boat in the dark. Roberto sat with his feet in the other fishing chair that was turned toward him.

“Let me have some of that,” Harry said to him.

“Go to hell,” said the big-faced man thickly. “This is mine.”

“All right,” said Harry, and went forward to get the other bottle. Below in the dark, with the bottle under the flap of his right arm, he pulled the cork that Freddy had drawn and re-inserted and took a drink.

Now’s as good as any time, he said to himself. No sense waiting now. Little boy’s spoke his piece. The big-faced bastard drunk. The other two seasick. It might as well be now.

He took another drink and the Bacardi warmed and helped him but he felt cold and hollow all around his stomach still. His whole

insides were cold.

"Want a drink?" he asked the boy at the wheel.

"No, thanks," the boy said. "I don't drink." Harry could see him smile in the binnacle light. He was a nice-looking boy all right. Pleasant talking, too.

"I'll take one," he said. He swallowed a big one but it could not warm the dank cold part that had spread from his stomach to all over the inside of his chest now. He put the bottle down on the cockpit floor.

"Keep her on that course," he said to the boy.

"I'm going to have a look at the motors."

He opened the hatch and stepped down. Then locked the hatch up with a long hook that set into a hole in the flooring. He stooped over the motors, with his one hand felt the water manifold, the cylinders, and put his hand on the stuffing boxes. He tightened the two grease cups a turn and a half each. Quit stalling, he said to himself. Come on, quit stalling. Where're your balls now? Under my chin, I guess, he thought.

He looked out of the hatch. He could almost touch the two seats over the gas tanks where the seasick men lay. The boy's back was toward him, sitting on the high stool, outlined clearly by the binnacle light. Turning, he could see Roberto sprawled in the chair in the stern, silhouetted against the dark water.

Twenty-one to a clip is four bursts of five at the most, he thought. I got to be light-fingered. All right. Come on. Quit stalling, you gutless wonder. Christ, what I'd give for another one. Well, there isn't any other one now. He reached his left hand up, unhooked the length of belting, put his hand around the trigger guard, pushed the safety all the way over with his thumb and pulled the gun out. Squatting in the engine pit he sighted carefully on the base of the back of the boy's head where it outlined against the light from the binnacle.

The gun made a big flame in the dark and the shells rattled

against the lifted hatch and onto the engine. Before the slump of the boy's body fell from the stool he had turned and shot into the figure on the left bunk, holding the jerking, flame-stabbing gun almost against the man, so close he could smell it burn his coat; then swung to put a burst into the other bunk where the man was sitting up, tugging at his pistol. He crouched low now and looked astern. The big-faced man was gone out of the chair. He could see both chairs silhouetted. Behind him the boy lay still. There wasn't any doubt about him. On one bunk a man was flopping. On the other, he could see with the corner of his eye, a man lay half over the gunwale, fallen over on his face.

Harry was trying to locate the big-faced man in the dark. The boat was going in a circle now and the cockpit lightened a little. He held his breath and looked. That must be him where it was a little darker on the floor in the corner. He watched it and it moved a little. That was him.

The man was crawling toward him. No, toward the man who lay half overboard. He was after his gun. Crouching low, Harry watched him move until he was absolutely sure. Then he gave him a burst. The gun lighted him on hands and knees, and, as the flame and the bot-bot-bot-bot stopped, he heard him flopping heavily.

"You son of a bitch," said Harry. "You big-faced murdering bastard."

All the cold was gone from around his heart now and he had the old hollow, singing feeling and he crouched low down and felt under the square, wood-crated gas tank for another clip to put in the gun. He got the clip, but his hand was cold-drying wet.

Hit the tank, he said to himself. I've got to cut the engines. I don't know where that tank cuts.

He pressed the curved lever, dropped the empty clip, shoved in the fresh one, and climbed up and out of the cockpit.

As he stood up, holding the Thompson gun in his left hand, looking around before shutting the hatch with the hook on his right

arm, the Cuban who had lain on the port bunk and had been shot three times through the left shoulder, two shots going into the gas tank, sat up, took careful aim, and shot him in the belly.

Harry sat down in a backward lurch. He felt as though he had been struck in the abdomen with a club. His back was against one of the iron-pipe supports of the fishing chairs and while the Cuban shot at him again and splintered the fishing chair above his head, he reached down, found the Thompson gun, raised it carefully, holding the forward grip with the hook and rattled half of the fresh clip into the man who sat leaning forward, calmly shooting at him from the seat. The man was down on the seat in a heap and Harry felt around on the cockpit floor until he could find the big-faced man, who lay face down, felt for his head with the hook on his bad arm, hooked it around, then put the muzzle of the gun against the head and touched the trigger. Touching the head, the gun made a noise like hitting a pumpkin with a club. Harry put down the gun and lay on his side on the cockpit floor.

"I'm a son of a bitch," he said, his lips against the planking. I'm a gone son of a bitch now. I got to cut the engines or we'll all burn up, he thought. I got a chance still. I got a kind of a chance. Jesus Christ. One thing to spoil it. One thing to go wrong. God damn it. Oh, God *damn* that Cuban bastard. Who'd have thought I hadn't got him?

He got on his hands and knees and letting one side of the hatch over the engines slam down, crawled over it forward to where the steering stool was. He pulled up on it, surprised to find how well he could move, then suddenly feeling faint and weak as he stood erect, he leaned forward with his bad arm resting on the compass and cut the two switches. The engines were quiet and he could hear the water against her sides. There was no other sound. She swung into the trough of the little sea the North wind had raised and began to roll.

He hung against the wheel, then eased himself onto the steering

stool, leaning against the chart table. He could feel the strength drain out of him in a steady faint nausea. He opened his shirt with his good hand and felt the hole with the base of the palm of his hand, then fingered it. There was very little bleeding. All inside, he thought. I better lie down and give it a chance to quiet.

The moon was up now and he could see what was in the cockpit.

Some mess, he thought, some hell of a mess.

Better get down before I fall down, he thought and he lowered himself down to the cockpit floor.

He lay on his side and then, as the boat rolled, the moonlight came in and he could see everything in the cockpit clearly.

It's crowded, he thought. That's what it is, it's crowded. Then, he thought, I wonder what she'll do. I wonder what Marie will do? Maybe they'll pay her the rewards. God damn that Cuban. She'll get along, I guess. She's a smart woman. I guess we would all have gotten along. I guess it was nuts all right. I guess I bit off too much more than I could chew. I shouldn't have tried it. I had it all right up to the end. Nobody'll know how it happened. I wish I could do something about Marie. Plenty money on this boat. I don't even know how much. Anybody be O. K. with that money. I wonder if the coast guard will pinch it. Some of it, I guess. I wish I could let the old woman know what happened. I wonder what she'll do? I don't know. I guess I should have got a job in a filling station or something. I should have quit trying to go in boats. There's no honest money going in boats anymore. If the bitch wouldn't only roll. If she'd only quit rolling. I can feel all that slopping back and forth inside. Me. Mr. Bee-lips and Albert. Everybody that had to do with it. These bastards too. It must be an unlucky business. Some unlucky business. I guess what a man like me ought to do is run something like a filling station. Hell, I couldn't run no filling station. Marie, she'll run something. She's too old to peddle her hips now. I wish this bitch wouldn't roll. I'll just have to take it easy. I

got to take it as easy as I can. They say if you don't drink water and lay still. They say especially if you don't drink water.

He looked at what the moonlight showed in the cockpit.

Well, I don't have to clean her up, he thought. Take it easy. That's what I got to do. Take it easy. I've got to take it as easy as I can. I've got sort of a chance. If you lay still and don't drink any water.

He lay on his back and tried to breathe steadily. The launch rolled in the Gulf Stream swell and Harry Morgan lay on his back in the cockpit. At first he tried to brace himself against the roll with his good hand. Then he lay quietly and took it.

Chapter Nineteen

The next morning in Key West Richard Gordon was on his way home from a visit to Freddy's Bar where he had gone to ask about the bank robbery. Riding his bicycle, he passed a heavy-set, big, blue-eyed woman, with bleached-blonde hair showing under her old man's felt hat, hurrying across the road, her eyes red from crying. Look at that big ox, he thought. What do you suppose a woman like that thinks about? What do you suppose she does in bed? How does her husband feel about her when she gets that size. Who do you suppose he runs around with in this town? Wasn't she an appalling looking woman? Like a battleship. Terrific.

He was almost home now. He left his bicycle on the front porch and went in the hallway, closing the front door the termites had tunnelled and riddled.

"What did you find out, Dick?" his wife called from the kitchen.

"Don't talk to me," he said. "I'm going to work. I have it all in my head."

"That's fine," she said. "I'll leave you alone."

He sat down at the big table in the front room. He was writing a novel about a strike in a textile factory. In today's chapter he was going to use the big woman with the tear-reddened eyes he had just seen on the way home. Her husband when he came home at night hated her, hated the way she had coarsened and grown heavy, was repelled by her bleached hair, her too big breasts, her lack of sympathy with his work as an organizer. He would compare her to the young, firm- breasted, full-lipped little Jewess that had spoken at the meeting that evening. It was good. It was, it could be easily,

terrific, and it was true. He had seen, in a flash of perception, the whole inner life of that type of woman.

Her early indifference to her husband's caresses. Her desire for children and security. Her lack of sympathy with her husband's aims. Her sad attempts to simulate an interest in the sexual act that had become actually repugnant to her. It would be a fine chapter.

The woman he had seen was Harry Morgan's wife, Marie, on her way home from the sheriff's office.

Chapter Twenty

Freddy Wallace's boat, the Queen Conch, 34 feet long, with a V number out of Tampa, was painted white; the forward deck was painted a color called Frolic green and the inside of the cockpit was painted Frolic green. The top of the house was painted the same color. Her name and home port, Key West, Fla., were painted in black across her stern. She was not equipped with outriggers and had no mast. She was equipped with glass windshields, one of which, that forward of the wheel, was broken. There were a number of fresh, wood-splintered holes in the newly painted planking of her hull. Splintered patches could be seen on both sides of her hull about a foot below the gunwale and a little forward of the center of the cockpit. There was another group of these splintered places almost at the water line on the starboard side of the hull opposite the aft stanchion that supported her house or awning. From the lower of these holes something dark had dripped and hung in ropy lines against the new paint of her hull.

She drifted broadside to the gentle north wind about ten miles outside of the north-bound tanker lanes, gay looking in her fresh white and green, against the dark, blue Gulf Stream water. There were patches of sun-yellowed Sargasso weed floating in the water near her that passed her slowly in the current going to the north and east, while the wind overcame some of the launch's drift as it set her steadily further out into the stream. There was no sign of life on her although the body of a man showed, rather inflated looking, above the gunwale, lying on a bench over the port gasoline tank and, from the long seat alongside the starboard gunwale, a man

seemed to be leaning over to dip his hand into the sea. His head and arms were in the sun and at the point where his fingers almost touched the water, there was a school of small fish, about two inches long, oval-shaped, golden-colored, with faint purple stripes, that had deserted the gulf weed to take shelter in the shade the bottom of the drifting launch made in the water, and each time anything dripped down into the sea, these fish rushed at the drop and pushed and milled until it was gone. Two gray sucker fish about eighteen inches long, swam round and round the boat in the shadow in the water, their slit mouths on the tops of their flat heads opening and shutting; but they did not seem to comprehend the regularity of the drip the small fish fed on and were as likely to be on the far side of the launch when the drop fell, as near it. They had long since pulled away the ropy, carmine clots and threads that trailed in the water from the lowest splintered holes, shaking their ugly, sucker-topped heads and their elongated, tapering, thin-tailed bodies as they pulled. They were reluctant now to leave a place where they had fed so well and unexpectedly.

Inside the cockpit of the launch there were three other men. One, dead, lay on his back where he had fallen below the steering stool. Another, dead, lay humped big against the scupper by the starboard aft stanchion. The third, still alive, but long out of his head, lay on his side with his head on his arm.

The bilge of the launch was full of gasoline and when she rolled at all this made a sloshing sound. The man, Harry Morgan, believed this sound was in his own belly and it seemed to him now that his belly was big as a lake and that it sloshed on both shores at once. That was because he was on his back now with his knees drawn up and his head back. The water of the lake that was his belly was very cold; so cold that when he stepped into its edge it numbed him, and he was extremely cold now and everything tasted of gasoline as though he had been sucking on a hose to syphon a tank. He knew there was no tank although he could feel a cold rubber hose that

seemed to have entered his mouth and now was coiled, big, cold, and heavy all down through him. Each time he took a breath the hose coiled colder and firmer in his lower abdomen and he could feel it like a big, smooth-moving snake in there, above the sloshing of the lake. He was afraid of it, but although it was in him, it seemed a vast distance away and what he minded, now, was the cold.

The cold was all through him, an aching cold that would not numb away, and he lay quietly now and felt it. For a time he had thought that if he could pull himself up over himself it would warm him like a blanket, and he thought for a while that he had gotten himself pulled up and he had started to warm. But that warmth was really only the hemorrhage produced by raising his knees up; and as the warmth faded he knew now that you could not pull yourself up over yourself and there was nothing to do about the cold but take it. Be lay there, trying hard in all of him not to die long after he could not think. He was in the shadow now, as the boat drifted, and it was colder all the time.

The launch had been drifting since 10 o'clock of the night before and it was now getting late in the afternoon. There was nothing else in sight across the surface of the Gulf Stream but the gulf weed, a few pink, inflated, membranous bubbles of Portuguese men-of-war cocked jauntily on the surface, and the distant smoke of a loaded tanker bound north from Tampico.

Chapter Twenty-One

"Well," Richard Gordon said to his wife.

"You have lipstick on your shirt," she said. "And over your ear."

"What about this?"

"What about what?"

"What about finding you lying on the couch with that drunken slob?"

"You did not."

"Where did I find you?"

"You found us sitting on the couch."

"In the dark."

"Where have you been?"

"At the Bradleys'."

"Yes," she said. "I know. Don't come near me. You reek of that woman."

"What do you reek of?"

"Nothing. I've been sitting, talking to a friend."

"Did you kiss him?"

"No."

"Did he kiss you?"

"Yes, I liked it."

"You bitch."

"If you call me that I'II leave you."

"You bitch."

"All right," she said. "It's over. If you weren't so conceited and I weren't so good to you, you'd have seen it was over a long time ago."

"You bitch."

"No," she said. "I'm not a bitch. I've tried to be a good wife, but you're as selfish and conceited as a barnyard rooster. Always crowing, 'Look what I've done. Look how I've made you happy. Now run along and cackle.' Well, you don't make me happy and I'm sick of you. I'm through cackling."

"You shouldn't cackle. You never produced anything to cackle about."

"Whose fault was that? Didn't I want children? But we never could afford them. But we could afford to go to the Cap d'Antibes to swim and to Switzerland to ski. We can afford to come down here to Key West. I'm sick of you. I dislike you. This Bradley woman today was the last straw."

"Oh, leave her out of it."

"You coming home with lipstick all over you. Couldn't you even wash? There's some on your forehead, too."

"You kissed that drunken twerp."

"No, I didn't. But I would have if I'd known what you were doing."

"Why did you let him kiss you?"

"I was furious at you. We waited and waited and waited. You never came near me. You went off with that woman and stayed for hours. John brought me home."

"Oh, John, is it?"

"Yes, John. JOHN. John."

"And what's his last name? Thomas?"

"His name is MacWalsey."

"Why don't you spell it?"

"I can't," she said, and laughed. But it was the last time she laughed. "Don't think it's all right because I laugh," she said, tears in her eyes, her lips working. "It's not all right. This isn't just an ordinary row. It's over. I don't hate you. It isn't violent. I just dislike you. I dislike you thoroughly and I'm through with you."

“All right,” he said.

“No. Not all right. All over. Don’t you understand?”

“I guess so.”

“Don’t guess.”

“Don’t be so melodramatic, Helen.”

“So I’m melodramatic, am I ? Well, I’m not. I’m through with you.”

“No, you’re not.”

“I won’t say it again.”

“What are you going to do?”

“I don’t know yet. I may marry John MacWalsey.”

“You will not.”

“I will if I wish.”

“He wouldn’t marry you.”

“Oh, yes, he will. He asked me to marry him this afternoon.”

Richard Gordon said nothing. A hollow had come in him where his heart had been, and everything he heard, or said, seemed to be overheard.

“He asked you what?” he said, his voice coming from a long way away.

“To marry him.”

“Why?”

“Because he loves me. Because he wants me to live with him. He makes enough money to support me.”

“You’re married to me.”

“Not really. Not in the church. You wouldn’t marry me in the church and it broke my poor mother’s heart as you well know. I was so sentimental about you I’d break anyone’s heart for you. My, I was a damned fool. I broke my own heart, too. It’s broken and gone. Everything I believed in and everything I cared about I left for you because you were so wonderful and you loved me so much that love was all that mattered. Love was the greatest thing, wasn’t it? Love was what we had that no one else had or could ever have?

And you were a genius and I was your whole life. I was your partner and your little black flower. Slop. Love is just another dirty lie. Love is ergoapiol pills to make me come around because you were afraid to have a baby. Love is quinine and quinine and quinine until I'm deaf with it. Love is that dirty aborting horror that you took me to. Love is my insides all messed up. It's half catheters and half whirling douches. I know about love. Love always hangs up behind the bathroom door. It smells like lysol. To hell with love. Love is you making me happy and then going off to sleep with your mouth open while I lie awake all night afraid to say my prayers even because I know I have no right to anymore. Love is all the dirty little tricks you taught me that you probably got out of some book. All right. I'm through with you and I'm through with love. Your kind of picknose love. You writer."

"You little mick slut."

"Don't call me names. I know the word for you."

"All right."

"No, not all right. All wrong and wrong again. If you were just a good writer I could stand for all the rest of it maybe. But I've seen you bitter, jealous, changing your politics to suit the fashion, sucking up to people's faces and talking about them behind their backs. I've seen you until I'm sick of you. Then that dirty rich bitch of a Bradley woman today. Oh, I'm sick of it. I've tried to take care of you and humor you and look after you and cook for you and keep quiet when you wanted and cheerful when you wanted and give you your little explosions and pretend it made me happy, and put up with your rages and jealousies and your meannesses and now I'm through."

"So now you want to start again with a drunken professor? "

"He's a man. He's kind and he's charitable and he makes you feel comfortable and we come from the same thing and we have values that you'll never have. He's like my father was."

"He's a drunk."

“He drinks. But so did my father. And my father wore wool socks and put his feet in them up on a chair and read the paper in the evening. And when we had croup he took care of us. He was a boiler maker and his hands were all broken and he liked to fight when he drank, and he could fight when he was sober. He went to mass because my mother wanted him to and he did his Easter duty for her and for Our Lord, but mostly for her, and he was a good union man and if he ever went with another woman she never knew it.”

“I’ll bet he went with plenty.”

“Maybe he did, but if he did he told the priest, not her, and if he did it was because he couldn’t help it and he was sorry and repented of it. He didn’t do it out of curiosity, or from barnyard pride, or to tell his wife what a great man he was. If he did it was because my mother was away with us kids for the summer, and he was out with the boys and got drunk. He was a man.”

“You ought to be a writer and write about him.”

“I’d be a better writer than you. And John MacWalsey is a good man. That’s what you’re not. You couldn’t be. No matter what your politics or your religion.”

“I haven’t any religion.”

“Neither have I. But I had one once and I’m going to have one again. And you won’t be there to take it away. Like you’ve taken away everything else.”

“No.”

“No. You can be in bed with some rich woman like Helène Bradley. How did she like you? Did she think you were wonderful?”

Looking at her sad, angry face, pretty with crying, the lips swollen freshly like something after rain, her curly dark hair wild about her face, Richard Gordon gave her up, then, finally:

“And you don’t love me anymore?”

“I hate the word even.”

“All right,” he said, and slapped her hard and suddenly across

the face.

She cried now from actual pain, not anger, her face down on the table.

"You didn't need to do that," she said.

"Oh, yes, I did," he said. "You know an awful lot, but you don't know how much I needed to do that."

That afternoon she had not seen him as the door opened. She had not seen anything but the white ceiling with its cake-frosting modeling of cupids, doves and scroll work that the light from the open door suddenly made clear.

Richard Gordon had turned his head and seen him, standing heavy and bearded in the doorway.

"Don't stop," Helène had said. "Please don't stop." Her bright hair was spread over the pillow.

But Richard Gordon had stopped and his head was still turned, staring.

"Don't mind him. Don't mind anything. Don't you see you can't stop now?" the woman had said in desperate urgency.

The bearded man had closed the door softly. He was smiling.

"What's the matter, darling?" Helène Bradley had asked, now in the darkness again.

"I must go."

"Don't you see you can't go?"

"That man—"

"That's only Tommy," Helène had said. "He knows all about these things. Don't mind him. Come on, darling. Please do."

"I can't."

"You must," Helène had said. He could feel her shaking, and her head on his shoulder was trembling. "My God, don't you know anything? Haven't you any regard for a woman?"

"I have to go," said Richard Gordon.

In the darkness he had felt the slap across his face that lighted flashes of light in his eyeballs. Then there was another slap. Across

his mouth this time.

"So that's the kind of man you are," she had said to him. "I thought you were a man of the world. Get out of here."

That was this afternoon. That was how it had finished at the Bradleys'.

Now his wife sat with her head forward on her hands that rested on the table and neither of them said anything. Richard Gordon could hear the clock ticking and he felt as hollow as the room was quiet. After a while his wife said without looking at him: "I'm sorry it happened. But you see it's over, don't you?"

"Yes, if that's the way it's been."

"It hasn't been all like that, but for a long time it's been that way."

"I'm sorry I slapped you."

"Oh, that's nothing. That hasn't anything to do with it. That was just a way to say good-bye."

"Don't."

"I'll have to get out," she said very tiredly. "I'll have to take the big suitcase, I'm afraid."

"Do it in the morning," he said. "You can do everything in the morning."

"I'd rather do it now, Dick, and it would be easier. But I'm so tired. It's made me awfully tired and given me a headache."

"You do whatever you want."

"Oh, God," she said. "I wish it wouldn't have happened. But it's happened. I'll try to fix everything up for you. You'll need somebody to look after you. If I hadn't of said some of that, or if you hadn't hit me, maybe we could have fixed it up again."

"No, it was over before that."

"I'm so sorry for you, Dick."

"Don't you be sorry for me or I'll slap you again."

"I guess I'd feel better if you slapped me," she said. "I *am* sorry for you. Oh, I *am*."

“Go to hell.”

“I’m sorry I said it about you not being good in bed. I don’t know anything about that. I guess you’re wonderful.”

“You’re not such a star,” he said.

She began to cry again.

“That’s worse than slapping,” she said.

“Well, what did you say?”

“I don’t know. I don’t remember. I was so angry and you hurt me so.”

“Well, it’s all over, so why be bitter.”

“Oh, I don’t want it to be over. But it is and there’s nothing to do now.”

“You’ll have your rummy professor.”

“Don’t,” she said. “Can’t we just shut up and not talk anymore?”

“Yes.”

“Will you?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll sleep out here.”

“No. You can have the bed. You must. I’m going out for a while.”

“Oh, don’t go out.”

“I’ve got to,” he said.

“Good-bye,” she said, and he saw her face he always loved so much, that crying never spoiled, and her curly black hair, her small firm breasts under the sweater forward against the edge of the table, and he didn’t see the rest of her that he’d loved so much and thought he had pleased, but evidently hadn’t been any good to, that was all below the table, and as he went out the door she was looking at him across the table; and her chin was on her hands; and she was crying.

Chapter Twenty-Two

He did not take the bicycle but walked down the street. The moon was up now and the trees were dark against it, and he passed the frame houses with their narrow yards, light coming from the shuttered windows; the unpaved alleys, with their double rows of houses; Conch town, where all was starched, well-shuttered, virtue, failure, grits and boiled grunts, under-nourishment, prejudice, righteousness, inter-breeding and the comforts of religion; the open-doored, lighted Cuban bolito houses, shacks whose only romance was their names; The Red House, Chicha's, the pressed stone church; its steeples sharp, ugly triangles against the moonlight; the big grounds and the long, black-domed bulk of the convent, handsome in the moonlight; a filling station and a sandwich place, bright-lighted beside a vacant lot where a miniature golf course had been taken out; past the brightly lit main street with the three drug stores, the music store, the five Jew stores, three poolrooms, two barbershops, five beer joints, three ice cream parlors, the five poor and the one good restaurant, two magazine and paper places, four second-hand joints (one of which made keys), a photographer's, an office building with four dentists' offices upstairs, the big dime store, a hotel on the corner with taxis opposite; and across, behind the hotel, to the street that led to jungle town, the big unpainted frame house with lights and the girls in the doorway, the mechanical piano going, and a sailor sitting in the street; and then on back, past the back of the brick courthouse with its clock luminous at half-past ten, past the whitewashed jail building shining in the moonlight, to the embowered entrance of the Lilac

Time where motor cars filled the alley.

The Lilac Time was brightly lighted and full of people, and as Richard Gordon went in he saw the gambling room was crowded, the wheel turning and the little ball clicking brittle against metal partitions set in the bowl, the wheel turning slowly, the ball whirring, then clicking jumpily until it settled and there was only the turning of the wheel and the rattling of chips. At the bar, the proprietor who was serving with two bartenders, said "'Allo, 'Allo. Mist' Gordon. What you have?"

"I don't know," said Richard Gordon.

"You don't look good. Whatsa matter ? You don't feel good?"

"No."

"I fix you something just fine. Fix you up hokay. You ever try a Spanish absinthe, *ojen*?"

"Go ahead," said Gordon.

"You drink him you feel good. Want to fight anybody in a house," said the proprietor. "Make Mistah Gordon a *ojen* special."

Standing at the bar, Richard Gordon drank three *ojen* specials but he felt no better; the opaque, sweetish, cold, licorice-tasting drink did not make him feel any different.

"Give me something else," he said to the bartender.

"Whatsa matter? You no like a *ojen* special?" the proprietor asked. "You no feel good?"

"No."

"You got be careful what you drink after him."

"Give me a straight whiskey."

The whiskey warmed his tongue and the back of his throat, but it did not change his ideas any, and suddenly, looking at himself in the mirror behind the bar, he knew that drinking was never going to do any good to him now. Whatever he had now he had, and it was from now on, and if he drank himself unconscious when he woke up it would be there.

A tall, very thin young man with a sparse stubble of blonde

beard on his chin who was standing next to him at the bar said, "Aren't you Richard Gordon?"

"Yes."

"I'm Herbert Spellman. We met at a party in Brooklyn one time I believe."

"Maybe," said Richard Gordon. "Why not?"

"I liked your last book very much," said Spellman. "I liked them all."

"I'm glad," said Richard Gordon. "Have a drink?"

"Have one with me," said Spellman. "Have you tried this *ojen*?"

"It's not doing me any good."

"What's the matter?"

"Feeling low."

"Wouldn't try another?"

"No. I'll have whiskey."

"You know, it's something to me to meet you," Spellman said. "I don't suppose you remember me at that party."

"No. But maybe it was a good party. You're not supposed to remember a good party, are you?"

"I guess not," said Spellman. "It was at Margaret Van Brunt's. Do you remember?" he asked hopefully.

"I'm trying to."

"I was the one set fire to the place," Spellman said.

"No," said Gordon.

"Yes," said Spellman, happily. "That was me. That was the greatest party I was ever on."

"What are you doing now?" Gordon asked.

"Not much," said Spellman. "I get around a little. I'm taking it sort of easy now. Are you writing a new book?"

"Yes. About half done."

"That's great," said Spellman. "What's it about?"

"A strike in a textile plant."

"That's marvellous," said Spellman. "You know I'm a sucker for

anything on the social conflict."

"What?"

"I love it," said Spellman. "I go for it above anything else. You're absolutely the best of the lot. Listen, has it got a beautiful Jewish agitator in it?"

"Why?" asked Richard Gordon, suspiciously.

"It's a part for Sylvia Sidney. I'm in love with her. Want to see her picture?"

"I've seen it," said Richard Gordon.

"Let's have a drink," said Spellman, happily. "Think of meeting you down here. You know, I'm a lucky fellow. Really lucky."

"Why?" asked Richard Gordon.

"I'm crazy," said Spellman. "Gee, it's wonderful. It's just like being in love only it always comes out right."

Richard Gordon edged away a little.

"Don't be that way," said Spellman. "I'm not violent. That's is, I'm almost never violent. Come on, let's have a drink."

"Have you been crazy long?"

"I think always," said Spellman. "I tell you it's the only way to be happy in times like these. What do I care what Douglas Aircraft does? What do I care what A. T. and T. does? They can't touch me. I just pick up one of your books or I take a drink, or I look at Sylvia's picture, and I'm happy. I'm like a bird. I'm better than a bird. I'm a —" he seemed to hesitate and hunt for a word, then hurried on. "I'm a lovely little stork," he blurted out and blushed. He looked at Richard Gordon fixedly, his lips working, and a large blonde young man detached himself from a group down the bar and coming toward him put a hand on his arm.

"Come on, Harold," he said. "We'd better be getting home."

Spellman looked at Richard Gordon wildly. "He sneered at a stork," he said. "He stepped away from a stork. A stork that wheels in circling flight—"

"Come on, Harold," said the big young man. Spellman put out

his hand to Richard Gordon.

"No offence," he said. "You're a good writer. Keep right on with it. Remember I'm always happy. Don't let them confuse you. See you soon."

With the large young man's arm over his shoulder the two of them moved out through the crowd to the door. Spellman looked back and winked at Richard Gordon.

"Nice fella," the proprietor said. He tapped his head. "Very well educate. Studies too much I guess. Likes to break glasses. He don't mean no harm. Pay for everything he break."

"Does he come in here much?"

"In the evening. What he say he was? A swan?"

"A stork."

"Other night was a horse. With wings. Like a horse on a white horse bottle only with pair a wings. Nice fella all right. Plenty money. Gets a funny ideas. Family keep him down here now with his man- ager. He told me he like your books, Mr. Gordon. What you have to drink? On the house."

"A whiskey," said Richard Gordon. He saw the sheriff coming toward him. The sheriff was an extremely tall, rather cadaverous and very friendly man. Richard Gordon had seen him that afternoon at the Bradleys' party and talked with him about the bank robbery.

"Say," said the sheriff, "if you're not doing anything come along with me a little later. The coast guard's towing in Harry Morgan's boat. A tanker signalled it up off Matacumbe. They've got the whole outfit."

"My God," said Richard Gordon. "They've got them all?"

"They're all dead except one man, the message said."

"You don't know who it is?"

"No, they didn't say. God knows what happened."

"Have they got the money?"

"Nobody knows. But it must be aboard if they didn't get to Cuba with it."

"When will they be in?"

"Oh, it will be two or three hours yet."

"Where will they bring the boat?"

"Into the Navy Yard, I suppose. Where the coast guard ties up."

"Where'll I see you to go down there?"

"I'll drop in here for you."

"Here or down at Freddy's. I can't stick it here much longer."

"It's pretty tough in at Freddy's tonight. It's full of those Vets from up on the Keys. They always raise the devil."

"I'll go down there and look at it," Richard Gordon said. "I'm feeling kind of low."

"Well, keep out of trouble," the sheriff said. "I'll pick you up there in a couple of hours. Want a lift down there?"

"Thanks."

They went out through the crowd and Richard Gordon got in beside the sheriff in his car.

"What do you suppose happened in Morgan's boat?" he asked.

"God knows," the sheriff said. "It sounds pretty grizzly."

"Didn't they have any other information?"

"Not a thing," said the sheriff. "Now look at that, will you?"

They were opposite the brightly lighted open front of Freddy's place and it was jammed to the sidewalk. Men in dungarees, some bareheaded, others in caps, old service hats and in cardboard helmets, crowded the bar three deep, and the loud-speaking nickle-in-the-slot phonograph was playing "Isle of Capri." As they pulled up a man came hurtling out of the open door, another man on top of him. They fell and rolled on the sidewalk, and the man on top, holding the other's hair in both hands, banged his head up and down on the cement, making a sickening noise. No one at the bar was paying any attention.

The sheriff got out of the car and grabbed the man on top by the shoulder.

"Cut it out," he said. "Get up there."

The man straightened up and looked at the sheriff. “For Christ sake, can’t you mind your own business?”

The other man, blood in his hair, blood oozing from one ear, and more of it trickling down his freckled face, squared off at the sheriff.

“Leave my buddy alone,” he said thickly. “What’s the matter? Don’t you think I can take it?”

“You can take it, Joey,” the man who had been hammering him said. “Listen,” to the sheriff, “could you let me take a buck?”

“No,” said the sheriff.

“Go to hell then.” He turned to Richard Gordon.

“What about it, pal?”

“I’ll buy you a drink,” said Gordon.

“Come on,” said the Vet, and took hold of Gordon’s arm.

“I’ll be by later,” the sheriff said.

“Good. I’ll be waiting for you.”

As they edged in toward the end of the bar, the red-headed, freckle-faced man with the bloody ear and face, gripped Gordon by the arm.

“My old buddy,” he said.

“He’s all right,” the other Vet said. “He can take it.”

“I can take it, see?” the bloody-faced one said. “That’s where I got it on them.”

“But you can’t hand it out,” someone said. “Cut out the shoving.”

“Let us in,” the bloody-faced one said. “Let in me and my old buddy.” He whispered into Richard Gordon’s ear, “I don’t have to hand it out. I can take it, see?”

“Listen,” the other Vet said as they finally reached the beer-wet bar, “You ought to have seen him at noon at the commissary at Camp Five. I had him down and I was hitting him on the head with a bottle. Just like playing on a drum. I bet I hit him fifty times.”

“More,” said the bloody-faced one.

“It didn’t make no impression on him.”

“I can take it,” said the other. He whispered in Richard Gordon’s ear, “It’s a secret.”

Richard Gordon handed over two of the three beers the white-jacketed, big-bellied nigger bartender drew and pushed toward him.

“What’s a secret?” he asked.

“Me,” said the bloody-faced one. “My secret.”

“He’s got a secret,” the other Vet said. “He isn’t lying.”

“Want to hear it?” the bloody-faced one said in Richard Gordon’s ear.

Gordon nodded. “It don’t hurt.”

The other nodded. “Tell him the worst of it.”

The red-headed one put his bloody lips almost to Gordon’s ear.

“Sometimes it feels good,” he said. “How do you feel about that?”

At Gordon’s elbow was a tall, thin man with a scar that ran from one corner of his eye down over his chin. He looked down at the red-headed one and grinned.

“First it was an art,” he said. “Then it became a pleasure. If things made me sick you’d make me sick, Red.”

“You make sick easy,” the first Vet said. “What outfit were you in?”

“It wouldn’t mean anything to you, punch drunk,” the tall man said.

“Have a drink?” Richard Gordon asked the tall man.

“Thanks,” the other said. “I’m drinking.”

“Don’t forget us,” said one of the two men Gordon had come in with.

“Three more beers,” said Richard Gordon, and the Negro drew them and pushed them over. There was not elbow room to lift them in the crowd and Gordon was pressed against the tall man.

“You off a ship?” asked the tall man.

“No, staying here. You down from the Keys?”

“We came in tonight from Tortugas,” the tall man said. “We raised enough hell so they couldn’t keep us there.”

“He’s a red,” the first Vet said.

“So would you be if you had any brains,” the tall man said. “They sent a bunch of us there to get rid of us but we raised too much hell for them.” He grinned at Richard Gordon.

“Nail that guy,” somebody yelled, and Richard Gordon saw a fist hit a face that showed close to him. The man who was hit was pulled away from the bar by two others. In the clear, one man hit him again, hard, in the face, and the other hit him in the body. He went down on the cement floor and covered his head with his arms and one of the men kicked him in the small of the back. All this time he had not made a sound. One of the men jerked him to his feet and pushed him up against the wall.

“Cool the son-of-a-bitch,” he said, and as the man sprawled, white faced against the wall, the second man set himself, knees slightly bent, and then swung up at him with a right fist that came from down near the cement floor and landed on the side of the white-faced man’s jaw. He fell forward on his knees and then rolled slowly over, his head in a little pool of blood. The two men left him there and came back to the bar.

“Boy, you can hit,” said one.

“That son-of-a-bitch comes in to town and puts all his pay in the postal savings and then hangs around here picking up drinks off the bar,” the other said. “That’s the second time I cooled him.”

“You cooled him this time.”

“When I hit him just then I felt his jaw go just like a bag of marbles,” the other said happily. The man lay against the wall and nobody paid any attention to him.

“Listen, if you landed on me like that it wouldn’t make no impression,” the red-headed Vet said.

“Shut up, slappy,” said the cooler. “You’ve got the old rale.”

“No, I haven’t.”

“You punchies make me sick,” the cooler said.

“Why should I bust my hands on you?”

“That’s just what you’d do, bust your hands,” the red-headed one said. “Listen, pal,” to Richard Gordon, “How’s to have another?”

“Aren’t they fine boys?” said the tall man. “War is a purifying and ennobling force. The question is whether only people like ourselves here are fitted to be soldiers or whether the different services have formed us.”

“I don’t know,” said Richard Gordon.

“I would like to bet you that not three men in this room were drafted,” the tall man said. “These are the elite. The very top cream of the scum. What Wellington won at Waterloo with. Well, Mr. Hoover ran us out of Anticosti flats and Mr. Roosevelt has shipped us down here to get rid of us. They’ve run the camp in a way to invite an epidemic, but the poor bastards won’t die. They shipped a few of us to Tortugas but that’s healthy now. Besides, we wouldn’t stand for it. So they’ve brought us back. What’s the next move? They’ve got to get rid of us. You can see that, can’t you?”

“‘Why?”

“Because we are the desperate ones,” the man said. “The ones with nothing to lose. We are the completely brutalized ones. We’re worse than the stuff the original Spartacus worked with. But it’s tough to try to do anything with because we have been beaten so far that the only solace is booze and the only pride is in being able to take it. But we’re not all like that. There are some of us that are going to hand it out.”

“Are there many Communists in the camp?”

“Only about forty,” the tall man said.

“Out of two thousand. It takes discipline and abnegation to be a Communist; a rummy can’t be a Communist.”

“Don’t listen to him,” the red-headed Vet said. “He’s just a goddamn radical.”

“Listen,” the other Vet who was drinking beer with Richard Gordon said, “let me tell you about in the Navy. Let me tell you, you goddamn radical.”

“Don’t listen to him,” the red-headed one said. “When the fleet’s in New York and you go ashore there in the evening up under Riverside Drive there’s old guys with long beards come down and you can piss in their beards for a dollar. What do you think about that?”

“I’ll buy you a drink,” said the tall man, “and you forget that one. I don’t like to hear that one.”

“I don’t forget anything,” the red-headed one said. “What’s the matter with you, pal?”

“Is that true about the beards?” Richard Gordon asked. He felt a little sick.

“I swear to God and my mother,” the red-headed one said. “Hell, that ain’t nothing.”

Up the bar a Vet was arguing with Freddy about the payment of a drink.

“That’s what you had,” said Freddy.

Richard Gordon watched the Vet’s face. He was very drunk, his eyes were bloodshot and he was looking for trouble.

“You’re a goddamn liar,” he said to Freddy.

“Eighty-five cents,” Freddy said to him.

“Watch this,” said the red-headed Vet.

Freddy spread his hands on the bar. He was watching the Vet.

“You’re a goddamn liar,” said the Vet, and picked up a beer glass to throw it. As his hand closed on it, Freddy’s right hand swung in a half circle over the bar and cracked a big saltcellar covered with a bar towel alongside the Vet’s head.

“Was it neat?” said the red-headed Vet. “Was it pretty?”

“You ought to see him tap them with that sawed-off billiard cue,” the other said.

Two Vets standing next to where the saltcellar man had slipped

down, looked at Freddy angrily. “What’s the idea of cooling him?”

“Take it easy,” said Freddy. “This one is on the house. Hey, Wallace,” he said. “Put that fellow over against the wall.”

“Was it pretty?” the red-headed Vet asked Richard Gordon. “Wasn’t that sweet?”

A heavy-set young fellow had dragged the salt-cellared man out through the crowd. He pulled him to his feet and the man looked at him vacantly. “Run along,” he said to him. “Get yourself some air.”

Over against the wall the man who had been cooled sat with his head in his hands. The heavy-set young man went over to him.

“You run along, too,” he said to him. “You just get in trouble here.”

“My jaw’s broken,” the cooled one said thickly. Blood was running out of his mouth and down over his chin.

“You’re lucky you aren’t killed, that wallop he hit you,” the thick-set young man said. “You run along now.”

“My jaw’s broke,” the other said dully. “They broke my jaw.”

“You better run along,” the young man said. “You just get in trouble here.”

He helped the jaw-broken man to his feet and he staggered unsteadily out to the street.

“I’ve seen a dozen laying against the wall over there on a big night,” the red-headed Vet said. “One morning I seen that big boogie there mopping it up with a bucket. Didn’t I see you mop it up with a bucket?” he asked the big Negro bartender.

“Yes, sir,” said the bartender. “Plenty of times. Yes, sir. But you never seen me fight nobody.”

“Didn’t I tell you?” said the red-headed Vet. “With a bucket.”

“This looks like a big night coming on,” the other Vet said. “What do you say, pal?” to Richard Gordon. “O.K. we have another one?”

Richard Gordon could feel himself getting drunk. His face, reflected in the mirror behind the bar, was beginning to look

strange to him.

"What's your name?" he asked the tall Communist.

"Jacks," the tall man said. "Nelson Jacks." "Where were you before you came here?"

"Oh, around," the man said. "Mexico, Cuba, South America, .and around."

"I envy you," said Richard Gordon.

"Why envy me? Why don't you get to work?"

"I've written three books," Richard Gordon said. "I'm writing one now about Gastonia."

"Good," said the tall man. "That's fine. What did you say your name was?"

"Richard Gordon."

"Oh," said the tall man. "What do you mean, 'oh'?"

"Nothing," said the tall man.

"Did you ever read the books?" Richard Gordon asked.

"Yes."

"Didn't you like them?"

"No," said the tall man.

"Why?"

"I don't like to say."

"Go ahead."

"I thought they were shit," the tall man said and turned away.

"I guess this is my night," said Richard Gordon. "This is my big night. What did you say you'd have?" he asked the red-headed Vet. "I've got two dollars left."

"One beer," said the red-headed man. "Listen, you're my pal. I think your books are fine. To hell with that radical bastard."

"You haven't got a book with you?" asked the other Vet. "Pal, I'd like to read one. Did you ever write for *Western Stories*, or *War Aces*? I could read that *War Aces* every day.

"Who is that tall bird?" asked Richard Gordon.

"I tell you he's just a radical bastard," said the second Vet. "The

camp's full of them. We'd run them out, but I tell you half the time most of the guys in camp can't remember."

"Can't remember what?" asked the red-headed one.

"Can't remember anything," said the other.

"You see me?" asked the red-headed one.

"Yes," said Richard Gordon.

"Would you guess I got the finest little wife in the world?"

"Why not?"

"Well, I have," said the red-headed one. "And that girl is nuts about me. She's like a slave. 'Give me another cup of coffee,' I say to her. 'O.K., Pop,' she says. And I get it. Anything else the same way. She's carried away with me. If I got a whim, it's her law."

"Only where is she?" asked the other Vet.

"That's it," said the red-headed one. "That's it, pal. Where is she?"

"He don't know where she is," the second Vet said.

"Not only that," said the red-headed one. "I don't know where I saw her last."

"He don't even know what country she's in,"

"But listen, buddy," said the red-headed one. "Wherever she is, that little girl is faithful."

"That's God's truth," said the other Vet. "You can stake your life on that."

"Sometimes," said the red-headed one, "I think that she is maybe Ginger Rogers and that she has gone into the moving pictures."

"Why not?" said the other.

"Then again, I just see her waiting there quietly where I live."

"Keeping the home fires burning," said the other.

"That's it," said the red-headed one. "She's the finest little woman in the world."

"Listen," said the other, "my old mother is O.K., too."

"That's right."

“She’s dead,” said the second Vet. “Let’s not talk about her.”

“Aren’t you married, pal?” the red-headed Vet asked Richard Gordon.

“Sure,” he said. Down the bar, about four men away, he could see the red face, the blue eyes and sandy, beer-dewed mustache of Professor MacWalsey. Professor MacWalsey was looking straight ahead of him and as Richard Gordon watched he finished his glass of beer and, raising his lower lip, removed the foam from his mustache. Richard Gordon noticed how bright blue his eyes were.

As Richard Gordon watched him he felt a sick feeling in his chest. And he knew for the first time how a man feels when he looks at the man his wife is leaving him for.

“What’s the matter, pal?” asked the red-headed Vet.

“Nothing.”

“You don’t feel good. I can tell you feel bad.”

“No,” said Richard Gordon.

“You look like you seen a ghost.”

“You see that fellow down there with a mustache?” asked Richard Gordon.

“Him?”

“Yes.”

“What about him?” asked the second Vet.

“Nothing,” said Richard Gordon. “Goddamn it.

Nothing.”

“Is he a bother to you? We can cool him. The three of us can jump him and you can put the boots to him.”

“No,” said Richard Gordon. “It wouldn’t do any good.”

“We’ll get him when he goes outside,” the red- headed Vet said. “I don’t like the look of him. The son-of-a-bitch looks like a scab to me.”

“I hate him,” said Richard Gordon. “He’s ruined my life.”

“We’ll give him the works,” said the second Vet.

“The yellow rat. Listen Red, get a hold of a couple of bottles.

We'll beat him to death. Listen, when did he do it, pal? O.K. we have another one?"

"We've got a dollar and seventy cents," Richard Gordon said.

"Maybe we better get a pint then," the red- headed Vet said. "My teeth are floating now."

"No," said the other. "This beer is good for you. This is draft beer. Stick with the beer. Let's go and beat this guy up and come back drink some more beer."

"No. Leave him alone."

"No, pal. Not us. You said that rat ruined your wife."

"My life. Not my wife."

"Jese! Pardon me. I'm sorry, pal."

"He defaulted and ruined the bank," the other Vet said. "I'll bet there's a reward for him. By God, I seen a picture of him at the post office today."

"What were you doing at the post office?" asked the other suspiciously.

"Can't I get a letter?"

"What's the matter with getting letters at camp?"

"Do you think I went to the postal savings?"

"What were you doing in the post office?"

"I just stopped by."

"Take that," said his pal and swung on him as well as he could in the crowd.

"There goes those two cell mates," said somebody. Holding and punching, kneeing and butting, the two were pushed out of the door.

"Let 'em fight on the sidewalk," the wide-shouldered young man said. "Those bastards fight three' or four times a night."

"They're a couple of punchies," another Vet said. "Red could fight once but he's got the old rale."

"They've both got it."

"Red got it fighting a fellow in the ring," a short chunky Vet

said. “This fellow had the old rale and he was all broke out on the shoulders and back. Every time they’d go into a clinch he’d rub his shoulder under Red’s nose or across his puss.”

“Oh, nuts. What did he put his face there for?”

“That was the way Red carried his head when he was in close. Down, like this. And this fellow was just roughing him.”

“Oh, nuts. That story is all bull. Nobody ever got the old rale from anybody in a fight.”

“That’s what you think. Listen, Red was as clean a living kid as you ever saw. I knew him. He was in my outfit. He was a good little fighter, too. I mean good. He was married, too, to a nice girl. I mean nice. And this Benny Sampson gave him that old rale just as sure as I’m standing here.”

“Then sit down,” said another Vet. “How did Poochy get it?”

“He got it in Shanghai.” “Where did you get yours?” “I ain’t got it.”

“Where did Suds get it?”

“Off a girl in Brest, coming home.”

“That’s all you guys ever talk about. The old rale. What difference does the old rale make?”

“None, the way we are now,” one Vet said. “You’re just as happy with it.”

“Poochy’s happier. He don’t know where he is.”

“What’s the old rale?” Professor MacWalsey asked the man next to him at the bar. The man told him.

“I wonder what the derivation is,” Professor MacWalsey said.

“I don’t know,” said the man. “I’ve always heard it called the old rale since my first enlistment. Some call it ral. But usually they call it the old rale.”

“I’d like to know,” said Professor MacWalsey.

“Most of those terms are old English words.”

“Why do they call it the old rale?” the Vet next to Professor MacWalsey asked another.

“I don’t know.”

Nobody seemed to know but all enjoyed the atmosphere of serious philological discussion.

Richard Gordon was next to Professor MacWalsey at the bar now. When Red and Poochy had started fighting he had been pushed down there and he had not resisted the move.

“Hello,” Professor MacWalsey said to him. “Do you want a drink?”

“Not with you,” said Richard Gordon.

“I suppose you’re right,” said Professor MacWalsey. “Did you ever see anything like this?”

“No,” said Richard Gordon.

“It’s very strange,” said Professor MacWalsey. “They’re amazing. I always come here nights.”

“Don’t you ever get in trouble?”

“No. Why should I?”

“Drunken fights.”

“I never seem to have any trouble.”

“A couple of friends of mine wanted to beat you up a couple of minutes ago.”

“Yes.”

“I wish I would have let them.”

“I don’t think it would make much difference,” said Professor MacWalsey in the odd way of speaking he had. “If I annoy you by being here I can go.”

“No,” said Richard Gordon. “I sort of like to be near you.”

“Yes,” said Professor MacWalsey.

“Have you ever been married?” asked Richard Gordon.

“Yes.”

“What happened?”

“My wife died during the influenza epidemic in 1918.”

“Why do you want to marry again now?”

“I think I’d be better at it now. I think perhaps I’d be a better

husband now."

"So you picked my wife."

"Yes," said Professor MacWalsey.

"Damn you," said Richard Gordon, and hit him in the face.

Someone grabbed his arm. He jerked it loose and someone hit him crashingly behind the ear. He could see Professor MacWalsey, before him, still at the bar, his face red, blinking his eyes. He was reaching for another beer to replace the one Gordon had spilled, and Richard Gordon drew back his arm to hit him again. As he did so, something exploded again behind his ear and all the lights flared up, wheeled round, and then went out.

Then he was standing in the doorway of Freddy's place. His head was ringing, and the crowded room was unsteady and wheeling slightly, and he felt sick to his stomach. He could see the crowd looking at him. The big-shouldered young man was standing by him. "Listen," he was saying, "you don't want to start any trouble in here. There's enough fights in here with those rummies."

"Who hit me?" asked Richard Gordon.

"I hit you," said the wide young man. "That fellow's a regular customer here. You want to take it easy. You don't want to go to fight in here."

Standing unsteadily Richard Gordon saw Professor MacWalsey coming toward him away from the crowd at the bar. "I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't want anybody to slug you. I don't blame you for feeling the way you do."

"Goddamn you," said Richard Gordon, and started toward him. It was the last thing he remembered doing for the wide young man set himself, dropped his shoulders slightly, and clipped him again, and he went down, this time, on the cement floor on his face. The wide young man turned to Professor MacWalsey. "That's all right, Doc," he said, hospitably. "He won't annoy you now. What's the matter with him anyway?"

"I've got to take him home," said Professor MacWalsey. "Will he

be all right?"

"Sure."

"Help me to get him in a taxi," said Professor MacWalsey. They carried Richard Gordon out between them and with the driver helping, put him in the old model T taxi.

"You're sure he'll be all right?" asked Professor MacWalsey.

"Just pull on his ears good when you want to bring him to. Put some water on him. Look out he don't want to fight when he comes to. Don't let him grab you, Doc."

"No," said Professor MacWalsey.

Richard Gordon's head lay back at an odd angle in the back of the taxi and he made a heavy, rasping noise when he breathed. Professor MacWalsey put his arm under his head and held it so it did not bump against the seat.

"Where are we going?" asked the taxi driver. "Out on the other end of town," said Professor MacWalsey. "Past the Park. Down the street from the place where they sell mullets."

"That's the Rocky Road," the driver said.

"Yes," said Professor MacWalsey.

As they passed the first coffee shop up the street, Professor MacWalsey told the driver to stop. He wanted to go in and get some cigarettes. He laid Richard Gordon's head down carefully on the seat and went into the coffee shop. When he came out to get back into the taxi, Richard Gordon was gone.

"Where did he go?" he asked the driver.

"That's him up the street," the driver said.

"Catch up with him."

As the taxi pulled up even with him, Professor MacWalsey got out and went up to Richard Gordon who was lurching along the sidewalk.

"Come on, Gordon," he said. "We're going home." Richard Gordon looked at him.

"We?" he said, swaying.

“I want you to go home in this taxi.”

“You go to hell.”

“I wish you’d come,” Professor MacWalsey said. “I want you to get home safely.”

“Where’s your gang?” said Richard Gordon.

“What gang?”

“Your gang that beat me up.”

“That was the bouncer. I didn’t know he was going to hit you.”

“You lie,” said Richard Gordon. He swung at the red-faced man in front of him and missed him. He slipped forward onto his knees and got up slowly. His knees were scraped raw from the sidewalk, but he did not know it.

“Come on and fight,” he said brokenly.

“I don’t fight,” said Professor MacWalsey. “If you’ll get into the taxi I’ll leave you.”

“Go to hell,” said Richard Gordon and started down the street.

“Leave him go,” said the taxi driver. “He’s all right now.”

“Do you think he’ll be all right?”

“Hell,” the taxi driver said. “He’s perfect.”

“I’m worried about’ him,” Professor MacWalsey said.

“You can’t get him in without fighting him,” the taxi driver said. “Let him go. He’s fine. Is he your brother?”

“In a way,” said Professor MacWalsey.

He watched Richard Gordon lurching down the street until he was out of sight in the shadow from the big trees whose branches dipped down to grow into the ground like roots. What he was thinking as he watched him, was not pleasant. It is a mortal sin, he thought, a grave and deadly sin and a great cruelty, and while technically one’s religion may permit the ultimate result, I cannot pardon myself. On the other hand, a surgeon cannot desist while operating for fear of hurting the patient. But why must all the operations in life be performed without an anesthetic? If I had been a better man I would have let him beat me up. It would have been

better for him. The poor stupid man. The poor homeless man. I ought to stay with him, but I know that is too much for him to bear. I am ashamed and disgusted with myself and I hate what I have done. It all may turn out badly too. But I must not think about that. I will now return to the anesthetic I have used for seventeen years and will not need much longer. Although it is probably a vice now for which I only invent excuses. Though at least it is a vice for which I am suited. But I wish I could help that poor man whom I am wronging.

"Drive me back to Freddy's," he said.

Chapter Twenty-Three

The Coast Guard cutter towing the *Queen Conch* was coming down the hawk channel between the reef and the Keys. The cutter rolled in the cross chop the light north wind raised against the flood tide but the white boat was towing easily and well.

"She'll be all right if it doesn't breeze," the coast guard captain said. "She tows pretty, too. That Robby built nice boats. Could you make out any of the guff he was talking?"

"He didn't make any sense," the mate said. "He's way out of his head."

"I guess he'll die all right," the captain said. "Shot in the belly that way. Do you suppose he killed those four Cubans?"

"You can't tell. I asked him but he didn't know what I was saying."

"Should we go talk to him again?"

"Let's have a look at him," the captain said.

Leaving the quartermaster at the wheel, running the beacons down the channel, they went behind the wheel house into the captain's cabin. Harry Morgan lay there on the iron pipe bunk. His eyes were closed but he opened them when the captain touched his wide shoulder.

"How you feeling, Harry?" the captain asked him. Harry looked at him and did not speak.

"Can we get you anything, boy?" the captain asked him.

Harry Morgan looked at him.

"He don't hear you," said the mate.

"Harry," said the captain, "do you want anything, boy?"

He wet a towel in the water bottle on a gimbal by the bunk and moistened Harry Morgan's deeply cracked lips. They were dry and black looking. Looking at him, Harry Morgan started speaking. "A man," he said.

"Sure," said the captain. "Go on."

"A man," said Harry Morgan, very slowly. "Ain't got no hasn't got any can't really isn't any way out." He stopped. There had been no expression on his face at all when he spoke.

"Go on, Harry," said the captain. "Tell us who did it. How did it happen, boy?"

"A man," said Harry, looking at him now with his narrow eyes on the wide, high-cheek-boned face, trying now to tell him.

"Four men," said the captain helpfully. He moistened the lips again, squeezing the towel so a few drops went between them.

"A man," corrected Harry; then stopped.

"All right. A man," the captain said.

"A man," Harry said again very flatly, very slowly, talking with his dry mouth. "Now the way things are the way they go no matter what no."

The captain looked at the mate and shook his head.

"Who did it, Harry?" the mate asked.

Harry looked at him.

"Don't fool yourself," he said. The captain and the mate both bent over him. Now it was coming. "Like trying to pass cars on the top of hills. On that road in Cuba. On any road. Anywhere. Just like that. I mean how things are. The way that they been going. For a while yes sure all right. Maybe with luck. A man." He stopped. The captain shook his head at the mate again. Harry Morgan looked at him flatly. The captain wet Harry's lips again. They made a bloody mark on the towel.

"A man," Harry Morgan said, looking at them both. "One man alone ain't got. No man alone now." He stopped. "No matter how a man alone ain't got no bloody fucking chance."

He shut his eyes. It had taken him a long time to get it out and it had taken him all of his life to learn it.

He lay there his eyes open again.

“Come on,” said the captain to the mate. “You sure you don’t want anything, Harry?”

Harry Morgan looked at him but he did not answer. He had told them, but they had not heard.

“We’ll be back,” said the captain. “Take it easy, boy.” Harry Morgan watched them go out of the cabin. Forward in the wheelhouse, watching it get dark and the light of Sombrero starting to sweep out at sea, the mate said, “He gives you the willies out of his head like that.”

“Poor fellow,” said the captain. “Well, we’ll be in pretty soon now. We’ll get him in soon after midnight. If we don’t have to slow down for that tow.”

“Think he’ll live?”

“No,” said the captain. “But you can’t ever tell.”

Chapter Twenty-Four

There were many people in the dark street outside the iron gates that closed the entrance to the old submarine base now transformed into a yacht basin. The Cuban watchman had orders to let no one in, and the crowd were pressing against the fence to look through between the iron rods into the dark enclosure lit, along the water, by the lights of the yachts that lay moored at the finger piers. The crowd was as quiet as only a Key West crowd can be. The yachtsmen pushed and elbowed their way through to the gate and by the watchman.

"Hey. You canna comein," the watchman said.

"What the hell. We're off a yacht."

"Nobody supposacomein," the watchman said. "Get back."

"Don't be stupid," said one of the yachtsmen, and pushed him aside to go up the road toward the dock.

Behind them was the crowd outside the gates, where the little watchman stood uncomfortable and anxious in his cap, his long mustache and his deshevelled authority, wishing he had a key to lock the big gate and, as they strode heartily up the sloping road they saw ahead, then passed, a group of men waiting at the Coast Guard pier. They paid no attention to them but walked along the dock, past the piers where the other yachts lay to pier number five, and out on the pier to where the gang plank reached, in the glare of a flood light, from rough wooden pier to the teak deck of the *New Exuma II*. In the main cabin they sat in big leather chairs beside a long table on which magazines were spread, and one of them rang for the steward.

“Scotch and soda,” he said.

“You, Henry?”

“Yes,” said Henry Carpenter.

“What was the matter with that silly ass at the gate?”

“I’ve no idea,” said Henry Carpenter.

The steward, in his white jacket, brought the two glasses.

“Play those disks I put out after dinner,” the yachtsman, whose name was Wallace Johnston, said.

“I’m afraid I put them away, sir,” the steward said.

“Damn you,” said Wallace Johnston. “Play that new Bach album then.”

“Very good, sir,” said the steward. He went over to the record cabinet and took out an album and moved with it to the phonograph. He began playing the “Sarabande.”

“Did you see Tommy Bradley today?” asked Henry Carpenter. “I saw him as the plane came in.”

“I can’t bear him,” said Wallace. “Neither him nor that whore of a wife of his.”

“I like Helène,” said Henry Carpenter. “She has such a good time.”

“Did you ever try it?”

“Of course. It’s marvellous.”

“I can’t stick her at any price,” said Wallace Johnston. “Why in God’s name does she live down here?”

“They have a lovely place.”

“It is a nice clean little yacht basin,” said Wallace Johnston. “Is it true Tommy Bradley’s impotent?”

“I shouldn’t think so. You hear that about everyone. He’s simply broad minded.”

“Broad minded is excellent. She’s certainly a broad if there ever was one.”

“She’s a remarkably nice woman,” said Henry Carpenter. “You’d like her, Wally.”

“I would not,” said Wallace. “She represents everything I hate in a woman, and Tommy Bradley epitomizes everything I hate in a man.”

“You feel awfully strongly tonight.”

“You never feel strongly because you have no consistency,” Wallace Johnston said. “You can’t make up your mind. You don’t know what you are even.”

“Let’s drop me,” said Henry Carpenter. He lit a cigarette.

“Why should I?”

“Well, one reason you might is because I go with you on your bloody yacht, and at least half the time I do what you want to do, and that keeps you from paying blackmail to the busboys and sailors, and one thing and another, that do know what they are, and what you are.”

“You’re in a pretty mood,” said Wallace Johnston. “You know I never pay blackmail.”

“No. You’re too tight to. You have friends like me instead.”

“I haven’t any other friends like you.”

“Don’t be charming,” said Henry. “I don’t feel up to it tonight. Just go ahead and play Bach and abuse your steward and drink a little too much and go to bed.”

“What’s gotten into you?” said the other, standing up. “Why are you getting so damned unpleasant? You’re not such a great bargain, you know.”

“I know,” said Henry. “I’ll be oh so jolly tomorrow. But tonight’s a bad night. Didn’t you ever notice any difference in nights? I suppose when you’re rich enough there isn’t any difference.”

“You talk like a school girl.”

“Good night,” said Henry Carpenter. “I’m not a school girl nor a school boy. I’m going to bed. Everything will be awfully jolly in the morning.”

“What did you lose? Is that what makes you so gloomy?”

“I lost three hundred.”

“See? I told you that was it.”

“You always know, don’t you?”

“But look. You lost three hundred.”

“I’ve lost more than that.”

“How much more?”

“The jackpot,” said Henry Carpenter. “The eternal jackpot. I’m playing a machine now that doesn’t give jackpots anymore. Only tonight I just happened to think about it. Usually I don’t think about it. Now I’m going to bed so I won’t bore you.”

“You don’t bore me. But just try not to be rude.” “I’m afraid I’m rude and you bore me. Good night.

Everything will be fine tomorrow.”

“You’re damned rude.”

“Take it or leave it,” said Henry. “I’ve been doing both all my life.”

“Good night,” said Wallace Johnston hopefully.

Henry Carpenter did not answer. He was listening to the Bach.

“Don’t go off to bed like that,” Wallace Johnston said. “Why be so temperamental?”

“Drop it.”

“Why should I? I’ve seen you come out of it before.”

“Drop it.”

“Have a drink and cheer up.”

“I don’t want a drink and it wouldn’t cheer me up.”

“Well, go off to bed, then.”

“I am,” said Henry Carpenter.

That was how it was that night on the *New Exuma II*, with a crew of twelve, Captain Nils Larson, master, and on board Wallace Johnston, owner, 38 years old, M.A. Harvard, composer, money from silk mills, unmarried, *interdit de sejour* in Paris, well known from Algiers to Biskra, and one guest, Henry Carpenter, 36, M.A. Harvard, money now two hundred a month in trust fund from his mother, formerly four hundred and fifty a month until the bank

administering the Trust Fund had exchanged one good security for another good security, for other not so good securities, and, finally, for an equity in an office building the bank had been saddled with and which paid nothing at all. Long before this reduction in income it had been said of Henry Carpenter that if he were dropped from a height of 5,500 feet without a parachute, he would land safely with his knees under some rich man's table. But he gave value in good company for his entertainment and while it was only lately, and rarely, that he felt, or expressed himself, as he had tonight, his friends had felt for some time that he was cracking up. If he had not been felt to be cracking up, with that instinct for feeling something wrong with a member of the pack and healthy desire to turn him out, if it is impossible to destroy him, which characterizes the rich; he would not have been reduced to accepting the hospitality of Wallace Johnston. As it was, Wallace Johnston, with his rather special pleasures, was Henry Carpenter's last stand, and he was defending his position better than he knew for his honest courting of an end to their relationship; his subsequent brutality of expression, and sincere insecurity of tenure intrigued and seduced the other who might, given Henry Carpenter's age, have easily been bored by a steady compliance. Thus Henry Carpenter postponed his inevitable suicide by a matter of weeks if not of months.

The money on which it was not worthwhile for him to live was one hundred and seventy dollars more a month than the fisherman Albert Tracy had been supporting his family on at the time of his death three days before.

Aboard the other yachts lying at the finger piers there were other people with other problems. On one of the largest yachts, a handsome, black, barkentine rigged three-master, a sixty-year-old grain broker lay awake worrying about the report he had received from his office of the activities of the investigators from the Internal Revenue Bureau. Ordinarily, at this time of night, he would have quieted his worry with Scotch high balls and have reached the state

where he felt as tough and regardless of consequences as any of the old brothers of the coast with whom, in character and standards of conduct, he had, truly, much in common. But his doctor had forbidden him all liquor for a month, for three months really, that is they had said it would kill him in a year if he did not give up alcohol for at least three months, so he was going to layoff it for a month; and now he worried about the call he had received from the Bureau before he left town asking him exactly where he was going and whether he planned to leave the United States coastal waters.

He lay, now, in his pajamas, on his wide bed, two pillows under his head, the reading light on, but he could not keep his mind on the book, which was an account of a trip to Galapagos. In the old days he had never brought them to this bed. He'd had them in their cabins and he came to this bed afterwards. This was his own stateroom, as private to him as his office. He never wanted a woman in his room. When he wanted one he went to hers, and when he was through he was through, and now that he was through for good his brain had the same clear coldness always that had, in the old days, been an after effect. And he lay now, with no kindly blurring, denied all that chemical courage that had soothed his mind and warmed his heart for so many years, and wondered what the department had, what they had found and what they would twist, what they would accept as normal and what they would insist was evasion; and he was not afraid of them, but only hated them and the power they would use so insolently that all his own hard, small, tough and lasting insolence, the one permanent thing he had gained and that was truly valid, would be drilled through, and, if he were ever made afraid, shattered.

He did not think in any abstractions, but in deals, in sales, in transfers and in gifts. He thought in shares, in bales, in thousands of bushels, in options, holding companies, trusts, and subsidiary corporations, and as he went over it he knew they had plenty, enough so he would have no peace for years. If they would not

compromise it would be very bad. In the old days he would not have worried, but the fighting part of him was tired now, along with the other part, and he was alone in all of this now and he lay on the big, wide, old bed and could neither read nor sleep.

His wife had divorced him ten years before after twenty years of keeping up appearances, and he had never missed her nor had he ever loved her. He had started with her money and she had borne him two male children, both of whom, like their mother, were fools. He had treated her well until the money he had made was double her original capital and then he could afford to take no notice of her. After his money had reached that point he had never been annoyed by her sick headaches, by her complaints, or by her plans. He had ignored them.

He had been admirably endowed for a speculative career because he had possessed extraordinary sexual vitality which gave him the confidence to gamble well; common sense, an excellent mathematical brain, a permanent but controlled skepticism; a skepticism which was as sensitive to impending disaster as an accurate aneroid barometer to atmospheric pressure; and a valid time sense that kept him from trying to hit tops or bottoms. These, coupled with a lack of morals, an ability to make people like him without ever liking or trusting them in return, while at the same time convincing them warmly and heartily of his friendship; not a disinterested friendship, but a friendship so interested in their success that it automatically made them accomplices; and an incapacity for either remorse or pity, had carried him to where he was now. And where he was now was lying in a pair of striped silk pajamas that covered his shrunken old man's chest, his bloated little belly, his now useless and disproportionately large equipment that had once been his pride, and his small flabby legs, lying on a bed unable to sleep because he finally had remorse.

His remorse was to think if only he had not been quite so smart five years ago. He could have paid the taxes then without any

juggling, and if he had only done so he would be all right now. So he lay thinking of that and finally he slept; but because remorse had once found the crack and begun to seep in, he did not know he slept because his brain kept on as it had while he was awake. So there would be no rest and, at his age, it would not take so long for that to get him.

He used to say that only suckers worried and he would keep from worrying now until he could not sleep. He might keep from it until he slept, but then it would come in, and since he was this old its task was easy.

He would not need to worry about what he had done to other people, nor what had happened to them due to him, nor how they'd ended; who'd moved from houses on the Lake Shore drive to taking boarders out in Austin, whose debutante daughters now were dentists' assistants when they had a job; who ended up a night watchman at sixty-three after that last corner; who shot himself early one morning before breakfast and which one of his children found him, and what the mess looked like; who now rode on the L to work, when there was work, from Berwyn, trying to sell, first, bonds; then motor cars; then house-to-housing novelties and specialties (we don't want no peddlers, get out of here, the door slammed in his face) until he varied the leaning drop his father made from forty-two floors up, with no rush of plumes as when an eagle falls, to a step forward onto the third rail in front of the Aurora-Elgin train, his overcoat pocket full of un- saleable combination eggbeaters and fruit juice extractors. *Just let me demonstrate it, madame. You attach it here, screw down on this little gadget here. Now watch.* No, I don't want it. *Just try one.* I don't want it. Get out.

So he got out onto the sidewalk with the frame houses, the naked yards and the bare catalpa trees where no one wanted it or anything else, that led down to the Aurora-Elgin tracks.

Some made the long drop from the apartment or the office

window; some took it quietly in two-car garages with the motor running; some used the native tradition of the Colt or Smith and Wesson , those well-constructed implements that end insomnia, terminate remorse, cure cancer, avoid bankruptcy, and blast an exit from intolerable positions by the pressure of a finger; those admirable American instruments so easily carried, so sure of effect, so well designed to end the American dream when it becomes a night- mare, their only drawback the mess they leave for relatives to clean up.

The men he broke made all these various exits but that never worried him. Somebody had to lose and only suckers worried.

No he would not have to think of them nor of the by-products of successful speculation. You win; somebody's got to lose, and only suckers worry.

It would be enough for him to think about how much it would be better if he had not been quite so smart five years ago, and in a little while, at his age, the wish to change what can no longer be undone, will open up the gap that will let worry in. Only suckers worry. But he can knock the worry if he takes a Scotch and soda. The hell with what the doctor said. So he rings for one and the steward comes sleepily, and as he drinks it, the speculator is not a sucker now; except for death.

While on the next yacht beyond, a pleasant, dull and upright family are asleep. The father's conscience is good and he sleeps soundly on his side, a clipper ship running before a blow framed above his head, the reading light on, a book dropped beside the bed. The mother sleeps well and dreams about her garden. She is fifty but is a handsome, wholesome, well- kept woman who looks attractive as she sleeps. The daughter dreams about her fiancé who comes tomorrow on the plane and she stirs in her sleep and laughs at something in the dream and, without waking, raises her knees almost against her chin, curled up like a cat, with curly blonde hair and her smooth- skinned pretty face, asleep she looks as her mother

did when she was a girl.

They are a happy family and all love each other. The father is a man of civic pride and many good works, who opposed prohibition, is not bigoted and is generous, sympathetic, understanding and almost never irritable. The crew of the yacht are well-paid, well-fed and have good quarters. They all think highly of the owner and like his wife and daughter. The fiancé is a Skull and Bones man, voted most likely to succeed, voted most popular, who still thinks more of others than of himself and would be too good for anyone except a lovely girl like Frances. He is probably a little too good for Frances too, but it will be years before Frances realizes this, perhaps; and she may never realize it, with luck. The type of man who is tapped for Bones is rarely also tapped for bed; but with a lovely girl like Frances intention counts as much as performance.

So, anyhow, they all sleep well and where did the money come from that they're all so happy with and use so well and gracefully? The money came from selling something everybody uses by the millions of bottles, which costs three cents a quart to make, for a dollar a bottle in the large (pint) size, fifty cents in the medium, and a quarter in the small. But it's more economical to buy the large, and if you make ten dollars a week the cost is just the same to you as though you were a millionaire, and the product's really good. It does just what it says it will and more besides. Grateful users from all over the world keep writing in discovering new uses and old users are as loyal to it as Harold Tompkins, the fiancé, is to Skull and Bones or Stanley Baldwin is to Harrow. There are no suicides when money's made that way and everyone sleeps soundly on the yacht *Alzira III*, master Jon Jacobson, crew of fourteen, owner and family aboard.

At pier four there is a 34-foot yawl-rigged yacht with two of the three hundred and twenty-four Esthonians who are sailing around in different parts of the world, in boats between 28 and 36 feet long and sending back articles to the Esthonian newspapers. These

articles are very popular in Esthonia and bring their authors between a dollar and a dollar and thirty cents a column. They take the place occupied by the baseball or football news in American newspapers and are run under the heading of Sagas of Our Intrepid Voyagers. No well-run yacht basin in Southern waters is complete without at least two sunburned, salt bleached-headed Esthonians who are waiting for a check from their last article. When it comes they will sail to another yacht basin and write another saga. They are very happy too. Almost as happy as the people on the *Alzira III*. It's great to be an Intrepid Voyager.

On the *Irydia IV*, a professional son-in-law of the very rich and his mistress, named Dorothy, the wife of that highly paid Hollywood director, John Hollis, whose brain is in the process of outlasting his liver so that he will end up calling himself a communist, to save his soul, his other organs being too corroded to attempt to save them, are asleep. The son-in-law, big-framed, good looking in a poster way, lies on his back snoring, but Dorothy Hollis, the director's wife, is awake and she puts on a dressing gown and, going out onto the deck, looks across the dark water of the yacht basin to the line the breakwater makes. It is cool on the deck and the wind blows her hair and she smooths it back from her tanned forehead, and pulling the robe tighter around her, her nipples rising in the cold, notices the lights of a boat coming along the outside of the breakwater. She watches them moving steadily and rapidly along and then at the entrance to the basin the boat's searchlight is switched on and comes across the water in a sweep that blinds her as it passes, picking up the coast guard pier where it lit up the group of men waiting there and the shining black of the new ambulance from the funeral home which also doubles at funerals as a hearse.

I suppose it would be better to take some luminol, Dorothy thought. I must get some sleep. Poor Eddie's tight as a tick. It means so much to him and he's so nice, but he gets so tight he goes right

off to sleep. He's so sweet. Of course if I married him he'd be off with someone else, I suppose. He is sweet, though. Poor darling, he's so tight. I hope he won't feel miserable in the morning. I must go and set this wave and get some sleep. It looks like the devil. I do want to look lovely for him. He is sweet. I wish I'd brought a maid. I couldn't though. Not even Bates. I wonder how poor John is. Oh, he's sweet too. I hope he's better. His poor liver. I wish I were there to look after him. I might go and get some sleep so I won't look a fright tomorrow. Eddie is sweet. So's John and his poor liver. Oh, his poor liver. Eddie is sweet. I wish he hadn't gotten so tight. He's so big and jolly and marvellous and all. Perhaps he won't get so tight tomorrow.

She went below and found her way to her cabin, and sitting before the mirror commenced brushing her hair a hundred strokes. She smiled at herself in the mirror as the long bristled brush swept through her lovely hair. Eddie is sweet. Yes, he is. I wish he hadn't gotten so tight. Men all have something that way. Look at John's liver. Of course you can't look at it. It must look dreadful really. I'm glad you can't see it. Nothing about a man's really ugly though. It's funny how they think it is though. I suppose a liver though. Or kidneys. Kidneys en brochette. How many kidneys are there? There's two of nearly everything except stomach and heart. And brain of course. There. That's a hundred strokes. I love to brush my hair. It's almost the only thing you do that's good for you that's fun. I mean by your- self. Oh, Eddie is sweet. Suppose I just went in there. No, he is too tight. Poor boy. I'll take the luminal.

She looked at herself in the mirror. She was extraordinarily pretty, with a small, very fine figure. Oh, I'll do, she thought. Some of it isn't as good as some of the rest of it, but I'll do for a while yet. You do have to have sleep though. I love to sleep. I wish I could get just one good natural real sleep the way we slept when we were kids. I suppose that's the thing about growing up and marrying and having children and then drinking too much and then doing all the

things you shouldn't. If you could sleep well I don't think any of it would be bad for you. Except drinking too much I suppose. Poor John and his liver and Eddie. Eddie is darling, anyway. He is cute. I'd better take the luminol.

She made a face at herself in the glass.

"You'd better take the luminal," she said in a whisper. She took the luminol with a glass of water from the chronium-plated thermos carafe that was on the locker by the bed.

It makes you nervous, she thought. But you have to sleep. I wonder how Eddie would be if we were married. He would be running around with someone younger I suppose. I suppose they can't help the way they're built any more than we can. I just want a lot of it and I feel so fine, and being someone else or someone new doesn't really mean a thing. It's just it itself, and you would love them always if they gave it to you. The same one I mean. But they aren't built that way. They want someone new, or someone younger, or someone that they shouldn't have, or someone that looks like someone else. Or if you're dark they want a blonde. Or if you're blonde they go for a redhead. Or if you're a redhead then it's something else. A Jewish girl I guess, and if they've had really enough they want Chinese or Lesbians or goodness knows what. I don't know. Or they just get tired, I suppose. You can't blame them if that's the way they are and I can't help John's liver either or that he's drunk so much he isn't any good. He was good. He was marvellous. He was. He really was. And Eddie is. But now he's tight. I suppose I'll end up a bitch. Maybe I'm one now. I suppose you never know when you get to be one. Only her best friends would tell her. You don't read it in Mr. Winchell. That would be a good new thing for him to announce. Bitch-hood. Mrs. John Hollis canined into town from the coast. Better than babies. More common I guess. But women have a bad time really. The better you treat a man and the more you show him you love him the quicker he gets tired of you. I suppose the good ones are made to have a lot of

wives but it's awfully wearing trying to be a lot of wives yourself, and then someone simple takes him when he's tired of that. I suppose we all end up as bitches but whose fault is it? The bitches have the most fun but you have to be awfully stupid really to be a good one. Like Helène Bradley. Stupid and well-intentioned and really selfish to be a good one. Probably I'm one already. They say you can't tell and that you always think you're not. There must be men who don't get tired of you or of it. There must be. But who has them? The ones we know are all brought up wrong. Let's not go into that now. No, not into that. Nor back to all those cars and all those dances. I wish that luminol would work. Damn Eddie, really. He shouldn't have really gotten so tight. It isn't fair, really. No one can help the way they're built but getting tight has nothing to do with that. I suppose I am a bitch all right, Jut if I lie here now all night and can't sleep I'll go crazy and if I take too much of that damned stuff I'll feel awfully all day tomorrow and then sometimes it won't put you to sleep and anyway I'll be cross and nervous and feel frightful. Oh, well, I might as well. I hate to but what can you do? What can you do but go ahead and do it even though, even though, even anyway, oh, he is sweet, no he isn't, I'm sweet, yes you are, you're lovely, oh, you're so lovely, yes, lovely, and I didn't want to, but I am, now I am really, he is sweet, no he's not, he's not even here, I'm here, I'm always here and I'm the one that cannot go away, no, never. You sweet one. You lovely. Yes you are. You lovely, lovely, lovely. Oh, yes, lovely. And you're me. So that's it. So that's the way it is. So what about it always now and over now. All over now. All right. I don't care. What difference does it make? It isn't wrong if I don't feel badly. And I don't. I just feel sleepy now and if I wake I'll do it again before I'm really awake.

She went to sleep then, remembering, just before she was finally asleep, to turn on her side so that her face did not rest on the pillow. She remembered, no matter how sleepy, how terribly bad it is for the face to sleep that way, resting on the pillow.

There were two other yachts in the harbor but everyone was asleep on them, too, when the Coast Guard boat towed Freddy Wallace's boat, the *Queen Conch*, into the dark yacht basin and tied up alongside the Coast Guard pier.

Chapter Twenty-Five

Harry Morgan knew nothing about it when they handed a stretcher down from the pier, and, with two men holding it on the deck of the gray-painted cutter under a floodlight outside the captain's cabin, two others picked him up from the captain's bunk and moved unsteadily out to ease him onto the stretcher. He had been unconscious since the early evening and his big body sagged the canvas of the stretcher deeply as the four men lifted it up toward the pier.

"Up with it now."

"Hold his legs. Don't let him slip."

"Up with it."

They got the stretcher onto the pier.

"How is he, Doctor?" asked the sheriff as the men shoved the stretcher into the ambulance.

"He's alive," said the doctor. "That's all you can say."

"He's been out of his head or unconscious ever since we picked him up," the boatswain's mate commanding the Coast Guard cutter said. He was a short chunky man with glasses that shone in the floodlight. He needed a shave. "All your Cuban stiffs are back in the launch. We left everything like it was. We didn't touch anything. We just put the two down. that might have gone overboard. Everything's just like it was. The money and the guns. Everything."

"Come on," said the sheriff. "Can you run a floodlight back there?"

"I'll have them plug one in on the dock," the dockmaster said. He went off to get the light and the cord.

“Come on,” said the sheriff. They went astern with flashlights. “I want you to show me exactly how you found them. Where’s the money?”

“In those two bags.”

“How much is there?”

“I don’t know. I opened one up and saw it was the money and shut it up. I didn’t want to touch it.”

“That’s right,” said the sheriff. “That’s exactly right.”

“Everything’s just like it was except we put two of the stiffs off the tanks down into the cockpit so they wouldn’t roll overboard, and we carried that big ox of a Harry aboard and put him in my bunk. I figured him to pass out before we got him in. He’s in a hell of a shape.”

“He’s been unconscious all the time?”

“He was out of his head at first,” said the skipper. “But you couldn’t make out what he was saying. We listened to a lot of it but it didn’t make sense. Then he got unconscious. There’s your layout. Just like it was only that niggery looking one on his side is laying where Harry lay. He was on the bench over the starboard tank hanging over the coaming and the other dark one by the side of him was on the other bench, the port side, hunched over on his face. Watch out. Don’t light any matches. She’s full of gas.”

“There ought to be another body,” said the sheriff.

“That’s all there was. The money’s in that bag. The guns are right where they were.”

“We better have somebody from the bank to see the money opened,” said the sheriff.

“O.K.,” said the skipper. “That’s a good idea.”

“We can take the bag to my office and seal it.”

“That’s a good idea,” said the skipper.

Under the floodlight the green and white of the launch had a freshly shiny look. This came from the dew on her deck and on the top of the house. The splinterings showed fresh through her white

paint. Astern of her the water was a clear green under the light and there were small fish about the pilings.

In the cockpit the inflated faces of the dead men were shiny under the light, lacquered brown where the blood had dried. There were empty .45 caliber shells in the cockpit around the dead and the Thompson gun lay in the stern where Harry had put it down. The two leather briefcases the men had brought the money aboard in, leaned against one of the gas tanks.

"I thought maybe I ought to take the money on board while we were towing her," the skipper said. "Then I thought it was better to leave it just exactly like it was so long as the weather was light."

"It was right to leave it," the sheriff said. "What's become of the other man, Albert Tracy, the fisherman?"

"I don't know. This is just how it was except for shifting those two," the skipper said. "They're all shot to pieces except that one there under the wheel laying on his back. He's just shot in the back of the head. It come out through the front. You can see what it did."

"He's the one that looked like a kid," the sheriff said.

"He don't look like anything now," the skipper said.

"That big one there is the one had the submachine gun and who killed attorney Robert Simmons," the sheriff said. "What do you suppose happened? How the devil did they all get shot?"

"They must have got fighting among themselves," the skipper said. "They must have had a dispute on how to split the money."

"We'll cover them up until morning," the sheriff said. "I'll take those bags."

Then, as they were standing there in the cockpit, a woman came running up the pier past the Coast Guard cutter, and behind her came the crowd. The woman was gaunt, middle-aged and bare-headed, and her stringy hair had come undone and was down on her neck although it was still knotted at the end. As she saw the bodies in the cockpit she commenced to scream. She stood on the pier screaming with her head back while two other women held her

arms. The crowd, which had come close behind her, formed around her, jostled close, looking down at the launch.

"God damn it," said the sheriff. "Who left that gate open? Get something to cover those bodies; blankets, sheets, anything, and we'll get this crowd out of here."

The woman stopped screaming and looked down into the launch, then put back her head and screamed again.

"Where they got him?" said one of the women near her.

"Where they put Albert?"

The woman who was screaming stopped it and looked in the launch again.

"He ain't there," she said. "Hey, you, Roger Johnson," she shouted at the sheriff. "Where's Albert? Where's Albert?"

"He isn't on board, Mrs. Tracy," the sheriff said.

The woman put her head back and screamed again, the chords in her scrawny throat rigid, her hands clenched, her hair shaking.

In the back of the crowd people were shoving and elbowing to get to the dock side.

"Come on. Let somebody else see."

"They're going to cover them up."

And in Spanish, "Let me pass. Let me look. *Hay cuatro muertos*. *Todos son muertos*. Let me see."

Now the woman was screaming, "Albert! Albert! Oh, my God, where's Albert?"

In the back of the crowd two young Cubans who had just come up and who could not penetrate the crowd stepped back, then ran and shoved forward together. The front line of the crowd swayed and bulged, then, in the middle of a scream, Mrs. Tracy and her two supporters toppled, hung slanted forward in desperate unbalance and then, while the supporters wildly hung to safety, Mrs. Tracy, still screaming, fell into the green water, the scream becoming a splash and bubble.

Two Coast Guard men dove into the clear green water where

Mrs. Tracy was splashing in the floodlight. The sheriff leaned out on the stern and shoved a boat hook out to her and finally, raised from below by the two Coast Guardsmen, pulled up by the arms by the sheriff, she was hoisted onto the stern of the launch. No one in the crowd had made a move to aid her, and, as she stood dripping on the stern, she looked up at them, shook both her fists at them and shouted; “Basards! Bishes!” Then as she looked into the cockpit she wailed, “Alber. Whersh Alber?”

“He’s not on board, Mrs. Tracy,” the sheriff said, taking up a blanket to put around her. “Try to be calm, Mrs. Tracy. Try to be brave.”

“My plate,” said Mrs. Tracy tragically. “Losht my plate.”

“We’ll dive it up in the morning,” the skipper of the Coast Guard cutter told her. “We’ll get it all right.”

The Coast Guard men had climbed up on the stern and were standing dripping. “Come on. Let’s go,” one of them said. “I’m getting cold.”

“Are you all right, Mrs. Tracy?” the sheriff said, putting the blanket around her.

“All rie? “ said Mrs. Tracy. “All rie?” then clenched both her hands and put her head back to really scream. Mrs. Tracy’s grief was greater than she could bear.

The crowd listened to her and was silent and respectful. Mrs. Tracy provided just the sound effect that was needed to go with the sight of the dead bandits that were now being covered with Coast Guard blankets by the sheriff and one of the deputies, thus veiling the greatest sight the town had seen since the Isleño had been lynched, years before, out on the County Road and then hung up to swing from a telephone pole in the lights of all the cars that had come out to see it.

The crowd was disappointed when the bodies were covered but they alone of all the town had seen them. They had seen Mrs. Tracy fall into the water and they had, before they came in, seen Harry

Morgan carried on a stretcher into the Marine Hospital. When the sheriff ordered them out of the yacht basin they went quietly and happily. They knew how privileged they had been.

Meanwhile at the Marine Hospital Harry Morgan's wife, Marie, and her three daughters waited on a bench in the receiving room. The three girls were crying and Marie was biting on a handkerchief. She hadn't been able to cry since about noon.

"Daddy's shot in the stomach," one of the girls said to her sister.

"It's terrible," said the sister.

"Be quiet," said the older sister. "I'm praying for him. Don't interrupt me."

Marie said nothing and only sat there, biting on a handkerchief and on her lower lip.

After a while the doctor came out. She looked at him and he shook his head.

"Can I go in?" she asked.

"Not yet," he said. She went over to him. "Is he gone?" she said.

"I'm afraid so, Mrs. Morgan."

"Can I go in and see him?"

"Not yet. He's in the operating room."

"Oh, Christ," said Marie. "Oh, Christ. I'll take the girls home. Then I'll be back."

Her throat suddenly was swollen hard and shut so she could not swallow.

"Come on, you girls," she said. The three girls followed her out to the old car where she got into the driver's seat and started the engine.

"How's Daddy?" one of the girls asked.

Marie did not answer.

"How's Daddy, Mother?"

"Don't talk to me," Marie said. "Just don't talk to me."

"But—"

"Shut up, Honey," said Marie. "Just shut up and pray for him."

The girls began to cry again.

"Damn it," said Marie. "Don't cry like that. I said pray for him."

"We will," said one of the girls. "I haven't stopped since we were at the hospital."

As they turned onto the worn white coral of the Rocky Road the headlight of the car showed a man walking unsteadily along ahead of them.

"Some poor rummy," thought Marie. "Some poor goddamned rummy."

They passed the man, who had blood on his face, and who kept on unsteadily in the dark after the lights of the car had gone on up the street. It was Richard Gordon on his way home.

At the door of the house Marie stopped the car.

"Go to bed, you girls," she said.

"Go on up to bed." "But what about Daddy?" one of the girls asked.

"Don't you talk to me," Marie said. "For Christ sake, please don't speak to me."

She turned the car in the road and started back toward the hospital.

Back at the hospital Marie Morgan climbed the steps in a rush. The doctor met her on the porch as he came out through the screen door. He was tired and on his way home.

"He's gone, Mrs. Morgan," he said.

"He's dead?"

"He died on the table."

"Can I see him?"

"Yes," the doctor said. "He went very peacefully, Mrs. Morgan. He was in no pain."

"Oh, hell," said Marie. Tears began to run down her cheeks. "Oh," she said. "Oh, oh, oh."

The doctor put his hand on her shoulder.

"Don't touch me," Marie said. Then, "I want to see him."

“Come on,” the doctor said. He walked with her down a corridor and into the white room where Harry Morgan lay on a wheeled table, a sheet over his great body. The light was very bright and cast no shadows. Marie stood in the doorway looking terrified by the light.

“He didn’t suffer at all, Mrs. Morgan,” the doctor said. Marie did not seem to hear him.

“Oh, Christ,” she said, and began to cry again.

“Look at his goddamned face.”

Chapter Twenty-Six

I don't know, Marie Morgan was thinking, sitting at the dining room table. I can take it just a day at a time and a night at a time, and maybe it gets different. It's the goddamned nights. If I cared about those girls it would be different. But I don't care about those girls. I've got to do something about them though. I've got to get started on something. Maybe you get over being dead inside. I guess it don't make any difference. I got to start to do something anyway. It's been a week today. I'm afraid if I think about him on purpose I'll get so I can't remember how he looks. That was when I got that awful panic when I couldn't remember his face. I got to get started doing something no matter how I feel. If he'd have left some money or if there'd been rewards it would have been better but I wouldn't feel no better. First thing I've got to do is try to sell the house. The bastards that shot him. Oh, the dirty bastards. That's the only feeling I got. Hate and a hollow feeling. I'm empty like a empty house. Well, I got to start to do something. I should have gone to the funeral. But I couldn't go. I got to start to do something now though. Ain't nobody going to come back anymore when they're dead.

Him, like he was, snotty and strong and quick, and like some kind of expensive animal. It would always get me just to watch him move. I was so lucky all that time to have him. His luck went bad first in Cuba. Then it kept right worse and worse until a Cuban killed him.

Cubans are bad luck for Conchs. Cubans are bad luck for anybody. They got too many niggers there too. I remember that

time he took me over to Havana when he was making such good money and we were walking in the park and a nigger said something to me and Harry smacked him, and picked up his straw hat that fell off, and sailed it about a half a block and a taxi ran over it. I laughed so it made my bellyache.

That was the first time I ever made my hair blonde that time there in that beauty parlor on the Prado. They were working on it all afternoon and it was naturally so dark they didn't want to do it and I was afraid I'd look terrible, but I kept telling them to see if they couldn't make it a little lighter, and the man would go over it with that orange wood stick with cotton on the end, dipping it in that bowl that had the stuff in it sort of smoky like the way it steamed sort of, and the comb; parting the strands with one end of the stick and the comb and going over them and letting it dry and I was sitting there scared inside my chest of what I was having done and all I'd say was, just see if you can't make it a little lighter.

And finally he said, that's just as light as I can make it safely, Madame, and then he shampooed it, and put a wave in, and I was afraid to look even for fear it would be terrible, and he waved it parted on one side and high behind my ears with little tight curls in back, and it still wet I couldn't tell how it looked except it looked all changed and I looked strange to myself. And he put a net over it wet and put me under the dryer and all the time I was scared about it. And then when I come out from under the dryer he took the net off and the pins out and combed it out and it was just like gold.

And I came out of the place and saw myself in the mirror and it shone so in the sun and was so soft and silky when I put my hand and touched it, and I couldn't believe it was me and I was so excited I was choked with it.

I walked down the Prado to the café where Harry was waiting and I was so excited feeling all funny inside, sort of faint like, and he stood up when he saw me coming and he couldn't take his eyes off me and his voice was thick and funny when he said, "Jesus,

Marie, you're beautiful."

And I said, "You like me blonde?"

"Don't talk about it," he said. "Let's go to the hotel."

And I said, "O.K., then. Let's go." I was twenty-six then.

And that's how he always was with me and that's the way I always was about, him. He said he never had anything like me and I know there wasn't any men like him. I know it too damned well and now he's dead.

Now I got to get started on something. I know I got to. But when you got a man like that and some lousy Cuban shoots him you can't just start right out; because everything inside of you is gone. I don't know what to do. It ain't like when he was away on trips. Then he was always coming back but now I got to go on the rest of my life. And I'm big now and ugly and old and he ain't here to tell me that I ain't. I'd have to hire a man to do it now I guess and then I wouldn't want him. So that's the way it goes. That's the way it goes all right.

And he was so goddamned good to me and reliable too, and he always made money some way and I never had to worry about money, only about him, and now that's all gone.

It ain't what happens to the one gets killed. I wouldn't mind if it was me got killed. With Harry at the end there he was just tired, the doctor said. He never woke up even. I was glad he died easy because Jesus Christ he must have suffered in that boat. I wonder if he thought about me or what he thought about. I guess like that you don't think about anybody. I guess it must have hurt too bad. But finally he was just too tired. I wish to Christ it was me was dead. But that ain't any good to wish. Nothing is any good to wish.

I couldn't go to the funeral. But people don't understand that. They don't know how you feel. Because good men are scarce. They just don't have them. Nobody knows the way you feel, because they don't know what it's all about that way. I know. I know too well. And if I live now twenty years what am I going to do? Nobody's going to tell me that and there ain't nothing now but take it every

day the way it comes and just get started doing something right away. That's what I got to do. But Jesus Christ, what do you do at nights is what I want to know.

How do you get through nights if you can't sleep?

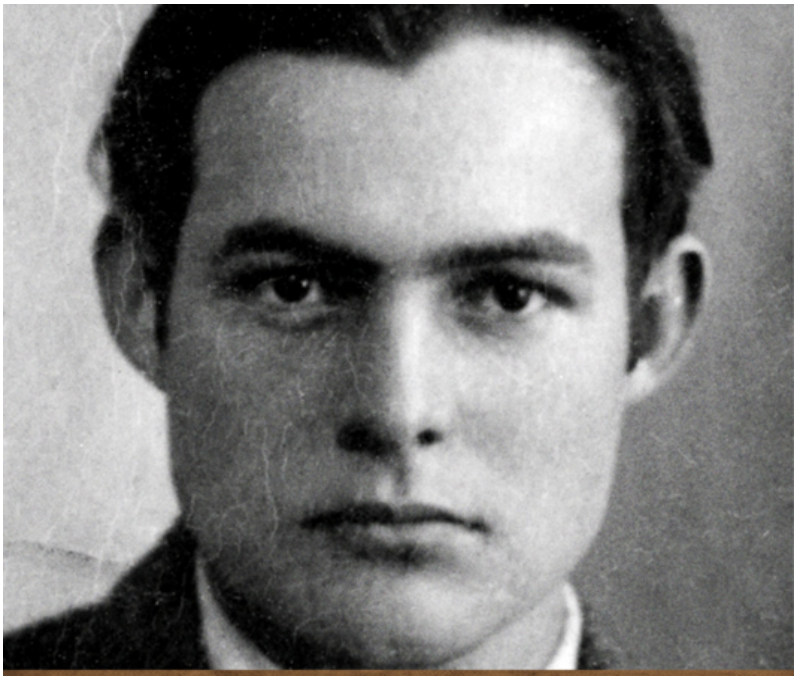
I guess you find out like you find out how it feels to lose your husband. I guess you find out all right. I guess you find out everything in this goddamned life. I guess you do all right. I guess I'm probably finding out right now. You just go dead inside and everything is easy. You just get dead like most people are most of the time. I guess that's how it is all right. I guess that's just about what happens to you. Well, I've got a good start. I've got a good start if that's what you have to do. I guess that's what you have to do all right. I guess that's it. I guess that's what it comes to. All right. I got a good start then. I'm way ahead of everybody now.

Outside it was a lovely, cool, sub-tropical winter day and the palm branches were sawing in the light north wind. Some winter people rode by the house on bicycles. They were laughing. In the big yard of the house across the street a peacock squawked.

Through the window you could see the sea looking hard and new and blue in the winter light.

A large white yacht was coming into the harbor and seven miles out on the horizon you could see a tanker, small and neat in profile against the blue sea, hugging the reef as she made to the westward to keep from wasting fuel against the stream.

THE END



ERNEST HEMINGWAY

For Whom the Bell Tolls

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Ernest Hemingway

CONTENTS

Dedication

Epigraph

Chapter One

Chapter Two

Chapter Three

Chapter Four

Chapter Five

Chapter Six

Chapter Seven

Chapter Eight

Chapter Nine

Chapter Ten

Chapter Eleven

Chapter Twelve

Chapter Thirteen

Chapter Fourteen

Chapter Fifteen

Chapter Sixteen

Chapter Seventeen

Chapter Eighteen

Chapter Nineteen

Chapter Twenty

Chapter Twenty-One

Chapter Twenty-Two

Chapter Twenty-Three

Chapter Twenty-Four

Chapter Twenty-Five

Chapter Twenty-Six

Chapter Twenty-Seven

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Chapter Thirty

Chapter Thirty-One

Chapter Thirty-Two

Chapter Thirty-Three

Chapter Thirty-Four

Chapter Thirty-Five

Chapter Thirty-Six

Chapter Thirty-Seven

Chapter Thirty-Eight

Chapter Thirty-Nine

Chapter Forty

Chapter Forty-One

Chapter Forty-Two

Chapter Forty-Three

Dedication

This book is for
Martha Gellhorn

Epigraph

No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

JOHN DONNE

Chapter One

He lay flat on the brown, pine-needled floor of the forest, his chin on his folded arms, and high overhead the wind blew in the tops of the pine trees. The mountainside sloped gently where he lay; but below it was steep and he could see the dark of the oiled road winding through the pass. There was a stream alongside the road and far down the pass he saw a mill beside the stream and the falling water of the dam, white in the summer sunlight.

"Is that the mill?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I do not remember it."

"It was built since you were here. The old mill is farther down; much below the pass."

He spread the photostated military map out on the forest floor and looked at it carefully. The old man looked over his shoulder. He was a short and solid old man in a black peasant's smock and gray ironstiff trousers and he wore rope-soled shoes. He was breathing heavily from the climb and his hand rested on one of the two heavy packs they had been carrying.

"Then you cannot see the bridge from here."

"No," the old man said. "This is the easy country of the pass where the stream flows gently. Below, where the road turns out of sight in the trees, it drops suddenly and there is a steep gorge-"

"I remember."

"Across this gorge is the bridge."

"And where are their posts?"

"There is a post at the mill that you see there."

The young man, who was studying the country, took his glasses from the pocket of his faded, khaki flannel shirt, wiped the lenses with a handkerchief, screwed the eyepieces around until the boards of the mill showed suddenly clearly and he saw the wooden bench beside the door; the huge pile of sawdust that rose behind the open shed where the circular saw was, and a stretch of the flume that brought the logs down from the mountainside on the other bank of the stream. The stream showed clear and smooth-looking in the glasses and, below the curl of the falling water, the spray from the dam was blowing in the wind.

"There is no sentry."

"There is smoke coming from the mill house," the old man said. "There are also clothes hanging on a line."

"I see them but I do not see any sentry."

"Perhaps he is in the shade," the old man explained. "It is hot there now. He would be in the shadow at the end we do not see."

"Probably. Where is the next post?"

"Below the bridge. It is at the road mender's hut at kilometer five from the top of the pass."

"How many men are here?" He pointed at the mill.

"Perhaps four and a corporal."

"And below?"

"More. I will find out."

"And at the bridge?"

"Always two. One at each end."

"We will need a certain number of men," he said. "How many men can you get?"

"I can bring as many men as you wish," the old man said. "There are many men now here in the hills."

"How many?"

"There are more than a hundred. But they are in small bands. How many men will you need?"

"I will let you know when we have studied the bridge."

“Do you wish to study it now?”

“No. Now I wish to go to where we will hide this explosive until it is time. I would like to have it hidden in utmost security at a distance no greater than half an hour from the bridge, if that is possible.”

“That is simple,” the old man said. “From where we are going, it will all be downhill to the bridge. But now we must climb a little in seriousness to get there. Are you hungry?”

“Yes,” the young man said. “But we will eat later. How are you called? I have forgotten.” It was a bad sign to him that he had forgotten.

“Anselmo,” the old man said. “I am called Anselmo and I come from Barco de Avila. Let me help you with that pack.”

The young man, who was tall and thin, with sun-streaked fair hair, and a wind- and sun-burned face, who wore the sun-faded flannel shirt, a pair of peasant’s trousers and rope-soled shoes, leaned over, put his arm through one of the leather pack straps and swung the heavy pack up onto his shoulders. He worked his arm through the other strap and settled the weight of the pack against his back. His shirt was still wet from where the pack had rested.

“I have it up now,” he said. “How do we go?”

“We climb,” Anselmo said.

Bending under the weight of the packs, sweating, they climbed steadily in the pine forest that covered the mountainside. There was no trail that the young man could see, but they were working up and around the face of the mountain and now they crossed a small stream and the old man went steadily on ahead up the edge of the rocky stream bed. The climbing now was steeper and more difficult, until finally the stream seemed to drop down over the edge of a smooth granite ledge that rose above them and the old man waited at the foot of the ledge for the young man to come up to him.

“How are you making it?”

“All right,” the young man said. He was sweating heavily and

his thigh muscles were twitchy from the steepness of the climb.

"Wait here now for me. I go ahead to warn them. You do not want to be shot at carrying that stuff."

"Not even in a joke," the young man said. "Is it far?"

"It is very close. How do they call thee?"

"Roberto," the young man answered. He had slipped the pack off and lowered it gently down between two boulders by the stream bed.

"Wait here, then, Roberto, and I will return for you."

"Good," the young man said. "But do you plan to go down this way to the bridge?"

"No. When we go to the bridge it will be by another way. Shorter and easier."

"I do not want this material to be stored too far from the bridge."

"You will see. If you are not satisfied, we will take another place."

"We will see," the young man said.

He sat by the packs and watched the old man climb the ledge. It was not hard to climb and from the way he found hand-holds without searching for them the young man could see that he had climbed it many times before. Yet whoever was above had been very careful not to leave any trail.

The young man, whose name was Robert Jordan, was extremely hungry and he was worried. He was often hungry but he was not usually worried because he did not give any importance to what happened to himself and he knew from experience how simple it was to move behind the enemy lines in all this country. It was as simple to move behind them as it was to cross through them, if you had a good guide. It was only giving importance to what happened to you if you were caught that made it difficult; that and deciding whom to trust. You had to trust the people you worked with completely or not at all, and you had to make decisions about the

trusting. He was not worried about any of that. But there were other things.

This Anselmo had been a good guide and he could travel wonderfully in the mountains. Robert Jordan could walk well enough himself and he knew from following him since before daylight that the old man could walk him to death. Robert Jordan trusted the man, Anselmo, so far, in everything except judgment. He had not yet had an opportunity to test his judgment, and, anyway, the judgment was his own responsibility. No, he did not worry about Anselmo and the problem of the bridge was no more difficult than many other problems. He knew how to blow any sort of bridge that you could name and he had blown them of all sizes and constructions. There was enough explosive and all equipment in the two packs to blow this bridge properly even if it were twice as big as Anselmo reported it, as he remembered it when he had walked over it on his way to La Granja on a walking trip in 1933, and as Golz had read him the description of it night before last in that upstairs room in the house outside of the Escorial.

"To blow the bridge is nothing," Golz had said, the lamplight on his scarred, shaved head, pointing with a pencil on the big map. "You understand? "

"Yes, I understand."

"Absolutely nothing. Merely to blow the bridge is a failure."

"Yes, Comrade General."

"To blow the bridge at a stated hour based on the time set for the attack is how it should be done. You see that naturally. That is your right and how it should be done."

Golz looked at the pencil, then tapped his teeth with it.

Robert Jordan had said nothing.

"You understand that is your right and how it should be done," Golz went on, looking at him and nodding his head. He tapped on the map now with the pencil. "That is how I should do it. That is what we cannot have."

"Why, Comrade General?"

"Why?" Golz said, angrily. "How many attacks have you seen and you ask me why? What is to guarantee that my orders are not changed? What is to guarantee that the attack is not annulled? What is to guarantee that the attack is not postponed? What is to guarantee that it starts within six hours of when it should start? Has any attack ever been as it should?"

"It will start on time if it is your attack," Robert Jordan said.

"They are never my attacks," Golz said. "I make them. But they are not mine. The artillery is not mine. I must put in for it. I have never been given what I ask for even when they have it to give. That is the least of it. There are other things. You know how those people are. It is not necessary to go into all of it. Always there is something. Always some one will interfere. So now be sure you understand."

"So when is the bridge to be blown?" Robert Jordan had asked.

"After the attack starts. As soon as the attack has started and not before. So that no reinforcements will come up over that road." He pointed with his pencil. "I must know that nothing will come up over that road."

"And when is the attack?"

"I will tell you. But you are to use the date and hour only as an indication of a probability. You must be ready for that time. You will blow the bridge after the attack has started. You see?" he indicated with the pencil. "That is the only road on which they can bring up reinforcements. That is the only road on which they can get up tanks, or artillery, or even move a truck toward the pass which I attack. I must know that bridge is gone. Not before, so it can be repaired if the attack is postponed. No. It must go when the attack starts and I must know it is gone. There are only two sentries. The man who will go with you has just come from there. He is a very reliable man, they say. You will see. He has people in the mountains. Get as many men as you need. Use as few as

possible, but use enough. I do not have to tell you these things."

"And how do I determine that the attack has started?"

"It is to be made with a full division. There will be an aerial bombardment as preparation. You are not deaf, are you?"

"Then I may take it that when the planes unload, the attack has started?"

"You could not always take it like that," Golz said and shook his head. "But in this case, you may. It is my attack."

"I understand it," Robert Jordan had said. "I do not say I like it very much."

"Neither do I like it very much. If you do not want to undertake it, say so now. If you think you cannot do it, say so now."

"I will do it," Robert Jordan had said. "I will do it all right."

"That is all I have to know," Golz said. "That nothing comes up over that bridge. That is absolute."

"I understand."

"I do not like to ask people to do such things and in such a way," Golz went on. "I could not order you to do it. I understand what you may be forced to do through my putting such conditions. I explain very carefully so that you understand and that you understand all of the possible difficulties and the importance."

"And how will you advance on La Granja if that bridge is blown?"

"We go forward prepared to repair it after we have stormed the pass. It is a very complicated and beautiful operation. As complicated and as beautiful as always. The plan has been manufactured in Madrid. It is another of Vicente Rojo, the unsuccessful professor's, masterpieces. I make the attack and I make it, as always, not in sufficient force. It is a very possible operation, in spite of that. I am much happier about it than usual. It can be successful with that bridge eliminated. We can take Segovia. Look, I show you how it goes. You see? It is not the top of the pass where we attack. We hold that. It is much beyond. Look— Here— Like this

__”

“I would rather not know,” Robert Jordan said.

“Good,” said Golz. “It is less of baggage to carry with you on the other side, yes?”

“I would always rather not know. Then, no matter what can happen, it was not me that talked.”

“It is better not to know,” Golz stroked his forehead with the pencil.”Many times I wish I did not know myself. But you do know the one thing you must know about the bridge?”

“Yes. I know that.”

“I believe you do,” Golz said. “I will not make you any little speech. Let us now have a drink. So much talking makes me very thirsty, Comrade Hordan. You have a funny name in Spanish, Comrade Hordown.”

“How do you say Golz in Spanish, Comrade General?”

“Hotze,” said Golz grinning, making the sound deep in his throat as though hawking with a bad cold. “Hotze,” he croaked. “Comrade Heneral Khotze. If I had known how they pronounced Golz in Spanish I would pick me out a better name before I come to war here. When I think I come to command a division and I can pick out any name I want and I pick out Hotze. Heneral Hotze. Now it is too late to change. How do you like *partizan* work?” It was the Russian term for guerilla work behind the lines.

“Very much,” Robert Jordan said. He grinned. “It is very healthy in the open air.”

“I like it very much when I was your age, too,” Golz said. “They tell me you blow bridges very well. Very scientific. It is only hearsay. I have never seen you do anything myself. Maybe nothing ever happens really. You really blow them?” he was teasing now. “Drink this,” he handed the glass of Spanish brandy to Robert Jordan. “You *really* blow them?”

“Sometimes.”

“You better not have any sometimes on this bridge. No, let us

not talk any more about this bridge. You understand enough now about that bridge. We are very serious so we can make very strong jokes. Look, do you have many girls on the other side of the lines?"

"No, there is no time for girls."

"I do not agree. The more irregular the service, the more irregular the life. You have very irregular service. Also you need a haircut."

"I have my hair cut as it needs it," Robert Jordan said. He would be damned if he would have his head shaved like Golz. "I have enough to think about without girls," he said sullenly.

"What sort of uniform am I supposed to wear?" Robert Jordan asked.

"None," Golz said. "Your haircut is all right. I tease you. You are very different from me," Golz had said and filled up the glasses again.

"You never think about only girls. I never think at all. Why should I? I am *Géneral Sovietique.* I never think. Do not try to trap me into thinking."

Some one on his staff, sitting on a chair working over a map on a drawing board, growled at him in the language Robert Jordan did not understand.

"Shut up," Golz had said, in English. "I joke if I want. I am so serious is why I can joke. Now drink this and then go. You understand, huh?"

"Yes," Robert Jordan had said. "I understand."

They had shaken hands and he had saluted and gone out to the staff car where the old man was waiting asleep and in that car they had ridden over the road past Guadarrama, the old man still asleep, and up the Navacerrada road to the Alpine Club hut where he, Rebert Jordan, slept for three hours before they started.

That was the last he had seen of Golz with his strange white face that never tanned, his hawk eyes, the big nose and thin lips and the shaven head crossed with wrinkles and with scars. Tomorrow night

they would be outside the Escorial in the dark along the road; the long lines of trucks loading the infantry in the darkness; the men, heavy loaded, climbing up into the trucks; the machinegun sections lifting their guns into the trucks; the tanks being run up on the skids onto the long-bodied tank trucks; pulling the Division out to move them in the night for the attack on the pass. He would not think about that. That was not his business. That was Golz's business. He had only one thing to do and that was what he should think about and he must think it out clearly and take everything as it came along, and not worry. To worry was as bad as to be afraid. It simply made things more difficult.

He sat now by the stream watching the clear water flowing between the rocks and, across the stream, he noticed there was a thick bed of watercress. He crossed the stream, picked a double handful, washed the muddy roots clean in the current and then sat down again beside his pack and ate the clean, cool green leaves and the crisp, peppery-tasting stalks. He knelt by the stream and, pushing his automatic pistol around on his belt to the small of his back so that it would not be wet, he lowered himself with a hand on each of two boulders and drank from the stream. The water was achingly cold.

Pushing himself up on his hands he turned his head and saw the old man coming down the ledge. With him was another man, also in a black peasant's smock and the dark gray trousers that were almost a uniform in that province, wearing rope-soled shoes and with a carbine slung over his back. This man was bareheaded. The two of them came scrambling down the rock like goats.

They came up to him and Robert Jordan got to his feet.

"Salud, Camarada," he said to the man with the carbine and smiled.

"Salud," the other said, grudgingly. Robert Jordan looked at the man's heavy, beard-stubbled face. It was almost round and his head was round and set close on his shoulders. His eyes were small and

set too wide apart and his ears were small and set close to his head. He was a heavy man about five feet ten inches tall and his hands and feet were large. His nose had been broken and his mouth was cut at one corner and the line of the scar across the upper lip and lower jaw showed through the growth of beard over his face.

The old man nodded his head at this man and smiled.

"He is the boss here," he grinned, then flexed his arms as though to make the muscles stand out and looked at the man with the carbine in a half-mocking admiration. "A very strong man."

"I can see it," Robert Jordan said and smiled again. He did not like the look of this man and inside himself he was not smiling at all.

"What have you to justify your identity?" asked the man with the carbine.

Robert Jordan unpinned a safety pin that ran through his pocket flap and took a folded paper out of the left breast pocket of his flannel shirt and handed it to the man, who opened it, looked at it doubtfully and turned it in his hands.

So he cannot read, Robert Jordan noted. "Look at the seal," he said.

The old man pointed to the seal and the man with the carbine studied it, turning it in his fingers.

"What seal is that?"

"Have you never seen it?"

"No."

"There are two," said Robert Jordan. "One is S. 1. M., the service of the military intelligence. The other is the General Staff."

"Yes, I have seen that seal before. But here no one commands but me," the other said sullenly. "What have you in the packs?"

"Dynamite," the old man said proudly. "Last night we crossed the lines in the dark and all day we have carried this dynamite over the mountain."

"I can use dynamite," said the man with the carbine. He handed

back the paper to Robert Jordan and looked him over. “Yes. I have use for dynamite. How much have you brought me?”

“I have brought you no dynamite,” Robert Jordan said to him evenly. “The dynamite is for another purpose. What is your name?”

“What is that to you?”

“He is Pablo,” said the old man. The man with the carbine looked at them both sullenly.

“Good. I have heard much good of you,” said Robert Jordan.

“What have you heard of me?” asked Pablo.

“I have heard that you are an excellent guerilla leader, that you are loyal to the republic and prove your loyalty through your acts, and that you are a man both serious and valiant. I bring you greetings from the General Staff.”

“Where did you hear all this?” asked Pablo. Robert Jordan registered that he was not taking any of the flattery.

“I heard it from Buitrago to the Escorial,” he said, naming all the stretch of country on the other side of the lines.

“I know no one in Buitrago nor in Escorial,” Pablo told him.

“There are many people on the other side of the mountains who were not there before. Where are you from?”

“Avila. What are you going to do with the dynamite?”

“Blow up a bridge.”

“What bridge?”

“That is my business.”

“If it is in this territory, it is my business. You cannot blow bridges close to where you live. You must live in one place and operate in another. I know my business. One who is alive, now, after a year, knows his business.”

“This is my business,” Robert Jordan said. “We can discuss it together. Do you wish to help us with the sacks?”

“No,” said Pablo and shook his head.

The old man turned toward him suddenly and spoke rapidly and furiously in a dialect that Robert Jordan could just follow. It was

like reading Quevedo. Anselmo was speaking old Castilian and it went something like this, “Art thou a brute? Yes. Art thou a beast? Yes, many times. Hast thou a brain? Nay. None. Now we come for something of consummate importance and thee, with thy dwelling place to be undisturbed, puts thy fox-hole before the interests of humanity. Before the interests of thy people. I this and that in the this and that of thy father. I this and that and that in thy this. *Pick up that bag.”*

Pablo looked down.

“Everyone has to do what he can do according to how it can be truly done,” he said. “I live here and I operate beyond Segovia. If you make a disturbance here, we will be hunted out of these mountains. It is only by doing nothing here that we are able to live in these mountains. It is the principle of the fox.”

“Yes,” said Anselmo bitterly. “It is the principle of the fox when we need the wolf.”

“I am more wolf than thee,” Pablo said and Robert Jordan knew that he would pick up the sack.

“Hi. Ho ... ,” Anselmo looked at him. “Thou art more wolf than me and I am sixty-eight years old.”

He spat on the ground and shook his head.

“You have that many years?” Robert Jordan asked, seeing that now, for the moment, it would be all right and trying to make it go easier.

“Sixty-eight in the month of July.”

“If we should ever see that month,” said Pablo. “Let me help you with the pack,” he said to Robert Jordan. “Leave the other to the old man.” He spoke, not sullenly, but almost sadly now. “He is an old man of great strength.”

“I will carry the pack,” Robert Jordan said.

“Nay,” said the old man. “Leave it to this other strong man.”

“I will take it,” Pablo told him, and in his sullenness there was a sadness that was disturbing to Robert Jordan. He knew that sadness

and to see it here worried him.

"Give me the carbine then," he said and when Pablo handed it to him, he slung it over his back and, with the two men climbing ahead of him, they went heavily, pulling and climbing up the granite shelf and over its upper edge to where there was a green clearing in the forest.

They skirted the edge of the little meadow and Robert Jordan, striding easily now without the pack, the carbine pleasantly rigid over his shoulder after the heavy, sweating pack weight, noticed that the grass was cropped down in several places and signs that picket pins had been driven into the earth. He could see a trail through the grass where horses had been led to the stream to drink and there was the fresh manure of several horses. They picket them here to feed at night and keep them out of sight in the timber in the daytime, he thought. I wonder how many horses this Pablo has?

He remembered now noticing, without realizing it, that Pablo's trousers were worn soapy shiny in the knees and thighs. I wonder if he has a pair of boots or if he rides in those *alpargatas,* he thought. He must have quite' an outfit. But I don't like that sadness, he thought. That sadness is bad. That's the sadness they get before they quit or before they betray. That is the sadness that comes before the sell-out.

Ahead of them a horse whinnied in the timber and then, through the brown trunks of the pine trees, only a little sunlight coming down through their thick, almost-touching tops, he saw the corral made by roping around the tree trunks. The horses had their heads pointed toward the men as they approached, and at the foot of a tree, outside the corral, the saddles were piled together and covered with a tarpaulin.

As they came up, the two men with the packs stopped, and Robert Jordan knew it was for him to admire the horses.

"Yes," he said. "They are beautiful." He turned to Pablo. "You have your cavalry and all."

There were five horses in the rope corral, three bays, a sorrel, and a buckskin. Sorting them out carefully with his eyes after he had seen them first together, Robert Jordan looked them over individually. Pablo and Anselmo knew how good they were and while Pablo stood now proud and less sad-looking, watching them lovingly, the old man acted as though they were some great surprise that he had produced, suddenly, himself.

"How do they look to you?" he asked.

"All these I have taken," Pablo said and Robert Jordan was pleased to hear him speak proudly.

"That," said Robert Jordan, pointing to one of the bays, a big stallion with a white blaze on his forehead and a single white foot, the near front, "is much horse."

He was a beautiful horse that looked as though he had come out of a painting by Vélasquez.

"They are all good," said Pablo. "You know horses?"

"Yes."

"Less bad," said Pablo. "Do you see a defect in one of these?"

Robert Jordan knew that now his papers were being examined by the man who could not read.

The horses all still had their heads up looking at the man. Robert Jordan slipped through between the double rope of the corral and slapped the buckskin on the haunch. He leaned back against the ropes of the enclosure and watched the horses circle the corral, stood watching them a minute more, as they stood still, then leaned down and came out through the ropes.

"The sorrel is lame in the off hind foot," he said to Pablo, not looking at him. "The hoof is split and although it might not get worse soon if shod properly, she could break down if she travels over much hard ground."

"The hoof was like that when we took her," Pablo said.

"The best horse that you have, the white-faced bay stallion, has a swelling on the upper part of the cannon bone that I do not like."

“It is nothing,” said Pablo. “He knocked it three days ago. If it were to be anything it would have become so already.”

He pulled back the tarpaulin and showed the saddles. There were two ordinary vaquero›s or herdsman›s saddles, like American stock saddles, one very ornate vaquero›s saddle, with hand-tooled leather and heavy, hooded stirrups, and two military saddles in black leather.

“We killed a pair of *guardia civil,”* he said, explaining the military saddles.

“That is big game.”

“They had dismounted on the road between Segovia and Santa Maria del Real. They had dismounted to ask papers of the driver of a cart. We were able to kill them without injuring the horses.”

“Have you killed many civil guards?” Robert Jordan asked.

“Several,” Pablo said. “But only these two without injury to the horses.”

“It was Pablo who blew up the train at Arevalo,” Anselmo said. “That was Pablo.”

“There was a foreigner with us who made the explosion,” Pablo said. “Do you know him?”

“What is he called?”

“I do not remember. It was a very rare name.”

“What did he look like?”

“He was fair, as you are, but not as tall and with large hands and a broken nose.”

“Kashkin,” Robert Jordan said. “That would be Kashkin.”

“Yes,” said Pablo. “It was a very rare name. Something like that. What has become of him?”

“He is dead since April.”

“That is what happens to everybody,” Pablo said, gloomily. “That is the way we will all finish.”

“That is the way all men end,” Anselmo said. “That is the way men have always ended. What is the matter with you, man? What

hast thou in the stomach?"

"They are very strong," Pablo said. It was as though he were talking to himself. He looked at the horses gloomily. "You do not realize how strong they are. I see them always stronger, always better armed. Always with more material. Here am I with horses like these. And what can I look forward to? To be hunted and to die. Nothing more."

"You hunt as much as you are hunted," Anselmo said.

"No," said Pablo. "Not any more. And if we leave these mountains now, where can we go? Answer me that? Where now?"

"In Spain there are many mountains. There are the Sierra de Gredos if one leaves here."

"Not for me," Pablo said. "I am tired of being hunted. Here we are all right. Now if you blow a bridge here, we will be hunted. If they know we are here and hunt for us with planes, they will find us. If they send Moors to hunt us out, they will find us and we must go. r am tired of all this. You hear?" He turned to Robert Jordan. "What right have you, a foreigner, to come to me and tell me what I must do?"

"I have not told you anything you must do," Robert Jordan said to him.

"You will though," Pablo said. "There. There is the badness."

He pointed at the two heavy packs that they had lowered to the ground while they had watched the horses. Seeing the horses had seemed to bring this all to a head in him and seeing that Robert Jordan knew horses had seemed to loosen his tongue. The three of them stood now by the rope corral and the patchy sunlight shone on the coat of the bay stallion. Pablo looked at him and then pushed with his foot against the heavy pack. "There is the badness."

"I come only for my duty," Robert Jordan told him. "I come under orders from those who are conducting the war. If I ask you to help me, you can refuse and I will find others who will help me. I have not even asked you for help yet. I have to do what I am

ordered to do and I can promise you of its importance. That I am a foreigner is not my fault. I would rather have been born here."

"To me, now, the most important is that we be not disturbed here," Pablo said. "To me, now, my duty is to those who are with me and to myself."

"Thyself. Yes," Anselmo said. "Thyself now since a long time. Thyself and thy horses. Until thou hadst horses thou wert with us. Now thou art another capitalist more."

"That is unjust," said Pablo. "I expose the horses all the time for the cause."

"Very little," said Anselmo scornfully. "Very little in my judgment. To steal, yes. To eat well, yes. To murder, yes. To fight, no."

"You are an old man who will make himself trouble with his mouth."

"I am an old man who is afraid of no one," Anselmo told him. "Also I am an old man without horses."

"You are an old man who may not live long."

"I am an old man who will live until I die," Anselmo said. "And I am not afraid of foxes."

Pablo said nothing but picked up the pack.

"Nor of wolves either," Anselmo said, picking up the other pack. "If thou art a wolf."

"Shut thy mouth," Pablo said to him. "Thou art an old man who always talks too much."

"And would do whatever he said he would do," Anselmo said, bent under the pack. "And who now is hungry. And thirsty. Go on, guerilla leader with the sad face. Lead us to something to eat." It is starting badly enough, Robert Jordan thought. But Anselmo's a man. They are wonderful when they are good, he thought. There is no people like them when they are good and when they go bad there is no people that is worse. Anselmo must have known what he was doing when he brought us here. But I don't like it. I don't like

any of it.

The only good sign was that Pablo was carrying the pack and that he had given him the carbine. Perhaps he is always like that, Robert Jordan thought. Maybe he is just one of the gloomy ones.

No, he said to himself, don't fool yourself. You do not know how he was before; but you do know that he is going bad fast and without hiding it. When he starts to hide it he will have made a decision. Remember that, he told himself. The first friendly thing he does, he will have made a decision. They are awfully good horses, though, he thought, beautiful horses. I wonder what could make me feel the way those horses make Pablo feel. The old man was right. The horses made him rich and as soon as he was rich he wanted to enjoy life. Pretty soon he'll feel bad because he can't join the Jockey Club, I guess, he thought. Pauvre Pablo. Il a manque son Jockey.

That idea made him feel better. He grinned, looking at the two bent backs and the big packs ahead of him moving through the trees. He had not made any jokes with himself all day and now that he had made one he felt much better. You're getting to be as all the rest of them, he told himself. You're getting gloomy, too. He'd certainly been solemn and gloomy with Golz. The job had overwhelmed him a little. Slightly overwhelmed, he thought. Plenty overwhelmed. Golz was gay and he had wanted him to be gay too before he left, but he hadn't been.

All the best ones, when you thought it over, were gay. It was much better to be gay and it was a sign of something too. It was like having immortality while you were still alive. That was a complicated one. There were not many of them left though. No, there were not many of the gay ones left. There were very damned few of them left. And if you keep on thinking like that, my boy, you won't be left either. Turn off the thinking now, old timer, old comrade. You're a bridgeblower now. Not a thinker. Man, I'm hungry, he thought. I hope Pablo eats well.

Chapter Two

They had come through the heavy timber to the cup-shaped upper end of the little valley and he saw where the camp must be under the rim-rock that rose ahead of them through the trees.

That was the camp all right and it was a good camp. You did not see it at all until you were up to it and Robert Jordan knew it could not be spotted from the air. Nothing would show from above. It was as well hidden as a bear's den. But it seemed to be little better guarded. He looked at it carefully as they came up.

There was a large cave in the rim-rock formation and beside the opening a man sat with his back against the rock, his legs stretched out on the ground and his carbine leaning against the rock. He was cutting away on a stick with a knife and he stared at them as they came up, then went on whittling.

"Hola," said the seated man. "What is this that comes?"

"The old man and a dynamiter," Pablo told him and lowered the pack inside the entrance to the cave. Anselmo lowered his pack, too, and Robert Jordan unslung the rifle and leaned it against the rock.

"Don't leave it so close to the cave," the whittling man, who had blue eyes in a dark, good-looking lazy gypsy face, the color of smoked leather, said. "There's a fire in there."

"Get up and put it away thyself," Pablo said. "Put it by that tree."

The gypsy did not move but said something unprintable, then, "Leave it there. Blow thyself up," he said lazily. "'Twill cure thy diseases."

“What do you make?” Robert Jordan sat down by the gypsy. The gypsy showed him. It was a figure four trap and he was whittling the crossbar for it.

“For foxes,” he said. “With a log for a dead-fall. It breaks their backs.” He grinned at Jordan. “Like this, see?” He made a motion of the framework of the trap collapsing, the log falling, then shook his head, drew in his hand, and spread his arms to show the fox with a broken back. “Very practical,” he explained.

“He catches rabbits,” Anselmo said. “He is a gypsy. So if he catches rabbits he says it is foxes. If he catches a fox he would say it was an elephant.”

“And if I catch an elephant?” the gypsy asked and showed his white teeth again and winked at Robert Jordan.

“You’d say it was a tank,” Anselmo told him.

“I’ll get a tank,” the gypsy told him. “I will get a tank. And you can say it is what you please.”

“Gypsies talk much and kill little,” Anselmo told him.

The gypsy winked at Robert Jordan and went on whittling.

Pablo had gone in out of sight in the cave. Robert Jordan hoped he had gone for food. He sat on the ground by the gypsy and the afternoon sunlight came down through the tree tops and was warm on his outstretched legs. He could smell food now in the cave, the smell of oil and of onions and of meat frying and his stomach moved with hunger inside of him.

“We can get a tank,” he said to the gypsy. “It is not too difficult.”

“With this?” the gypsy pointed toward the two sacks.

“Yes,” Robert Jordan told him. “I will teach you. You make a trap. It is not too difficult.”

“You and me?”

“Sure,” said Robert Jordan. “Why not?”

“Hey,” the gypsy said to Anselmo. “Move those two sacks to where they will be safe, will you? They’re valuable.”

Anselmo grunted. “I am going for wine,” he told Robert Jordan. Robert Jordan got up and lifted the sacks away from the cave entrance and leaned them, one on each side of a tree trunk. He knew what was in them and he never liked to see them close together.

“Bring a cup for me,” the gypsy told him.

“Is there wine?” Robert Jordan asked, sitting down again by the gypsy.

“Wine? Why not? A whole skinful. Half a skinful, anyway.”

“And what to eat?”

“Everything, man,” the gypsy said. “We eat like generals.”

“And what do gypsies do in the war?” Robert Jordan asked him.

“They keep on being gypsies.”

“That’s a good job.”

“The best,” the gypsy said. “How do they call thee?”

“Roberto. And thee?”

“Rafael. And this of the tank is serious?”

“Surely. Why not?”

Anselmo came out of the mouth of the cave with a deep stone basin full of red wine and with his fingers through the handles of three cups. “Look,” he said. “They have cups and all.” Pablo carne out behind them.

“There is food soon,” he said. “Do you have tobacco?”

Robert Jordan went over to the packs and opening one, felt inside an inner pocket and brought out one of the flat boxes of Russian cigarettes he had gotten at Golz’s headquarters. He ran his thumbnail around the edge of the box and, opening the lid, handed them to Pablo who took half a dozen. Pablo, holding them in one of his huge hands, picked one up and looked at it against the light. They were long narrow cigarettes with pasteboard cylinders for mouthpieces.

“Much air and little tobacco,” he said. “I know these. The other with the rare name had them.”

“Kashkin,” Robert Jordan said and offered the cigarettes to the gypsy and Anselmo, who each took one.

“Take more,” he said and they each took another. He gave them each four more, they making a double nod with the hand holding the cigarettes so that the cigarette dipped its end as a man salutes with a sword, to thank him.

“Yes,” Pablo said. “It was a rare name.”

“Here is the wine.” Anselmo dipped a cup out of the bowl and handed it to Robert Jordan, then dipped for himself and the gypsy.

“Is there no wine for me?” Pablo asked. They were all sitting together by the cave entrance.

Anselmo handed him his cup and went into the cave for another. Corning out he leaned over the bowl and dipped the cup full and they all touched cup edges.

The wine was good, tasting faintly resinous from the wineskin, but excellent, light and clean on his tongue. Robert Jordan drank it slowly, feeling it spread warmly through his tiredness.

“The food comes shortly,” Pablo said. “And this foreigner with the rare name, how did he die?”

“He was captured and he killed himself.”

“How did that happen?”

“He was wounded and he did not wish to be a prisoner.”

“What were the details?”

“I don’t know,” he lied. He knew the details very well and he knew they would not make good talking now.

“He made us promise to shoot him in case he were wounded at the business of the train and should be unable to get away,” Pablo said. “He spoke in a very rare manner.”

He must have been jumpy even then, Robert Jordan thought. Poor old Kashkin.

“He had a prejudice against killing himself,” Pablo said. “He told me that. Also he had a great fear of being tortured.”

“Did he tell you that, too?” Robert Jordan asked him.

“Yes,” the gypsy said. “He spoke like that to all of us.”

“Were you at the train, too?”

“Yes. All of us were at the train.”

“He spoke in a very rare manner,” Pablo said. “But he was very brave.”

Poor old Kashkin, Robert Jordan thought. He must have been doing more harm than good around here. I wish I would have known he was that jumpy as far back as then. They should have pulled him out. You can’t have people around doing this sort of work and talking like that. That is no way to talk. Even if they accomplish their mission they are doing more harm than good, talking that sort of stuff.

“He was a little strange,” Robert Jordan said. “I think he was a little crazy.”

“But very dexterous at producing explosions,” the gypsy said. “And very brave.”

“But crazy,” Robert Jordan said. “In this you have to have very much head and be very cold in the head. That was no way to talk.”

“And you,” Pablo said. “If you are wounded in such a thing as this bridge, you would be willing to be left behind?”

“Listen,” Robert Jordan said and, leaning forward, he dipped himself another cup of the wine. “Listen to me clearly. If ever I should have any little favors to ask of any man, I will ask him at the time.”

“Good,” said the gypsy approvingly. “In this way speak the good ones. Ah! Here it comes.”

“You have eaten,” said Pablo.

“And r can eat twice more,” the gypsy told him. “Look now who brings it.”

The girl stooped as she came out of the cave mouth carrying the big iron cooking platter and Robert Jordan saw her face turned at an angle and at the same time saw the strange thing about her. She smiled and said, *“Hola,* Comrade,” and Robert Jordan said, *“Salud, “*

and was careful not to stare and not to look away. She set down the Rat iron platter in front of him and he noticed her handsome brown hands. Now she looked him full in the face and smiled. Her teeth were white in her brown face and her skin and her eyes were the same golden tawny brown. She had high cheekbones, merry eyes and a straight mouth with full lips. Her hair was the golden brown of a grain field that has been burned dark in the sun but it was cut short all over her head so that it was but little longer than the fur on a beaver pelt. She smiled in Robert Jordan's face and put her brown hand up and ran it over her head, Rattening the hair which rose again as her hand passed. She has a beautiful face,Robert Jordan thought. She'd be beautiful if they hadn't cropped her hair.

"That is the way I comb it," she said to Robert Jordan and laughed. "Go ahead and eat. Don't stare at me. They gave me this haircut in Valladolid. It's almost grown out now."

She sat down opposite him and looked at him. He looked back at her and she smiled and folded her hands together over her knees. Her legs slanted long and clean from the open cuffs of the trousers as she sat with her hands across her knees and he could see the shape of her small up-tilted breasts under the gray shirt. Every time Robert Jordan looked at her he could feel a thickness in his throat.

"There are no plates," Anselmo said. "Use your own knife." The girl had leaned four forks, tines down, against the sides of the iron dish.

They were all eating out of the platter, not speaking, as is the Spanish custom. It was rabbit cooked with onions and green peppers and there were chick peas in the red wine sauce. It was well cooked, the rabbit meat Raked off the bones, and the sauce was delicious. Robert Jordan drank another cup of wine while he ate. The girl watched him all through the meal. Everyone else was watching his food and eating. Robert Jordan wiped up the last of the sauce in front of him with a piece of bread, piled the rabbit bones to one side, wiped the spot where they had been for sauce,

then wiped his fork clean with the bread, wiped his knife and put it away and ate the bread. He leaned over and dipped his cup full of wine and the girl still watched him.

Robert Jordan drank half the cup of wine but the thickness still came in his throat when he spoke to the girl.

"How art thou called?" he asked. Pablo looked at him quickly when he heard the tone of his voice. Then he got up and walked away.

"Maria. And thee?"

"Roberto. Have you been long in the mountains?"

"Three months."

"Three months?" He looked at her hair, that was as thick and short and rippling when she passed her hand over it, now in embarrassment, as a grain field in the wind on a hillside. "It was shaved," she said. "They shaved it regularly in the prison at Valladolid. It has taken three months to grow to this. I was on the train. They were taking me to the south. Many of the prisoners were caught after the train was blown up but I was not. I came with these."

"I found her hidden in the rocks," the gypsy said. "It was when we were leaving. Man, but this one was ugly. We took her along but many times I thought we would have to leave her."

"And the other one who was with them at the train?" asked Maria. "The other blond one. The foreigner. Where is he?"

"Dead," Robert Jordan said. "In April."

"In April? The train was in April."

"Yes," Robert Jordan said. "He died ten days after the train."

"Poor man," she said. "He was very brave. And you do that same business?"

"Yes."

"You have done trains, too?"

"Yes. Three trains."

"Here?"

“In Estremadura,” he said. “I was in Estremadura before I came here. We do very much in Estremadura. There are many of us working in Estremadura.”

“And why do you come to these mountains now?”

“I take the place of the other blond one. Also I know this country from before the movement.”

“You know it well?”

“No, not really well. But I learn fast. I have a good map and I have a good guide.”

“The old man,” she nodded. “The old man is very good.”

“Thank you,” Anselmo said to her and Robert Jordan realized suddenly that he and the girl were not alone and he realized too that it was hard for him to look at her because it made his voice change so. He was violating the second rule of the two rules for getting on well with people that speak Spanish; give the men tobacco and leave the women alone; and he realized, very suddenly, that he did not care. There were so many things that he had not to care about, why should he care about that?

“You have a very beautiful face,” he said to Maria. “I wish I would have had the luck to see you before your hair was cut.”

“It will grow out,” she said. “In six months it will be long enough.”

“You should have seen her when we brought her from the train. She was so ugly it would make you sick.”

“Whose woman are you?” Robert Jordan asked, trying not to pull out of it. “Are you Pablo’s?”

She looked at him and laughed, then slapped him on the knee.

“Of Pablo? You have seen Pablo?”

“Well, then, of Rafael. I have seen Rafael.”

“Of Rafael neither.”

“Of no one,” the gypsy said. “This is a very strange woman. Is of no one. But she cooks well.”

“Really of no one?” Robert Jordan asked her.

“Of no one. No one. Neither in joke nor in seriousness. Nor of thee either.”

“No?” Robert Jordan said and he could feel the thickness coming in his throat again. “Good. I have no time for any woman. That is true.”

“Not fifteen minutes?” the gypsy asked teasingly. “Not a quarter of an hour?” Robert Jordan did not answer. He looked at the girl, Maria, and his throat felt too thick for him to trust himself to speak.

Maria looked at him and laughed, then blushed suddenly but kept on looking at him.

“You are blushing,” Robert Jordan said to her. “Do you blush much?”

“Never.”

“You are blushing now.”

“Then I will go into the cave.”

“Stay here, Maria.”

“No,” she said and did not smile at him. “I will go into the cave now.” She picked up the iron plate they had eaten from and the four forks. She moved awkwardly as a colt moves, but with that same grace as of a young animal.

“Do you want the cups?” she asked.

Robert Jordan was still looking at her and she blushed again.

“Don’t make me do that,” she said. “I do not like to do that.”

“Leave them,” they gypsy said to her. “Here,” he dipped into the stone bowl and handed the full cup to Robert Jordan who watched the girl duck her head and go into the cave carrying the heavy iron dish.

“Thank you,” Robert Jordan said. His voice was all right again, now that she was gone. “This is the last one. We’ve had enough of this.”

“We will finish the bowl,” the gypsy said. “There is over half a skin. We packed it in on one of the horses.”

“That was the last raid of Pablo,” Anselmo said. “Since then he

has done nothing."

"How many are you?" Robert Jordan asked.

"We are seven and there are two women."

"Two?"

"Yes. The *mujer* of Pablo."

"And she?"

"In the cave. The girl can cook a little. I said she cooks well to please her. But mostly she helps the *mujer* of Pablo."

"And how is she, the *mujer* of Pablo?"

"Something barbarous," the gypsy grinned. "Something *very* barbarous. If you think Pablo is ugly you should see his woman. But brave. A hundred times braver than Pablo. But something barbarous."

"Pablo was brave in the beginning," Anselmo said. "Pablo was something serious in the beginning."

"He killed more people than the cholera," the gypsy said. "At the start of the movement, Pablo killed more people than the typhoid fever."

"But since a long time he is *muy flojo,* Anselmo said. "He is very flaccid. He is very much afraid to die."

"It is possible that it is because he has killed so many at the beginning," the gypsy said philosophically. "Pablo killed more than the bubonic plague."

"That and the riches," Anselmo said. "Also he drinks very much. Now he would like to retire like a *matador de taros.* Like a bullfighter. But he cannot retire."

"If he crosses to the other side of the lines they will take his horses and make him go in the army," the gypsy said. "In me there is no love for being in the army either."

"Nor is there in any other gypsy," Anselmo said.

"Why should there be?" the gypsy asked. "Who wants to be in an army? Do we make the revolution to be in an army? I am willing to fight but not to be in an army."

“Where are the others?” asked Robert Jordan. He felt comfortable and sleepy now from the wine and lying back on the floor of the forest he saw through the tree tops the small afternoon clouds of the mountains moving slowly in the high Spanish sky.

“There are two asleep in the cave,” the gypsy said. “Two are on guard above where we have the gun. One is on guard below. They are probably all asleep.”

Robert Jordan rolled over on his side.

“What kind of a gun is it?”

“A very rare name,” the gypsy said. “It has gone away from me for the moment. It is a machine gun.”

It must be an automatic rifle, Robert Jordan thought.

“How much does it weigh?” he asked.

“One man can carry it but it is heavy. It has three legs that fold. We got it in the last serious raid. The one before the wine.”

“How many rounds have you for it?”

“An infinity,” the gypsy said. “One whole case of an unbelievable heaviness.”

Sounds like about five hundred rounds, Robert Jordan thought.

“Does it feed from a pan or a belt?”

“From round iron cans on the top of the gun.” Hell, it’s a Lewis gun, Robert Jordan thought.

“Do you know anything about a machine gun?” he asked the old man.

“Nada,” said Anselmo. “Nothing.”

“And thou?” to the gypsy.

“That they fire with much rapidity and become so hot the barrel burns the hand that touches it,” the gypsy said proudly.

“Everyone knows that,” Anselmo said with contempt.

“Perhaps,” the gypsy said. “But he asked me to tell what I know about a *máquina* and I told him.” Then he added, “Also, unlike an ordinary rifle, they continue to fire as long as you exert pressure on the trigger.”

“Unless they jam, run out of ammunition or get so hot they melt,” Robert Jordan said in English.

“What do you say?” Anselmo asked him.

“Nothing,” Robert Jordan said. “I was only looking into the future in English.”

“That is seomthing truly rare,” the gypsy said. “Looking into the future in *Inglés.* Can you read in the palm of the hand?”

“No,” Robert Jordan said and he dipped another cup of wine.

“But if thou canst I wish thee would read in the palm of my hand and tell me what is going to pass in the next three days.”

“The *mujer* of Pablo reads in the hands,” the gypsy said. “But she is so irritable and of such a barbarousness that I do not know if she will do it.”

Robert Jordan sat up now and took a swallow of the wine.

“Let us see the *mujer* of Pablo now,” he said. “If it is that bad let us get it over with.”

“I would not disturb her,” Rafael said. “She has a strong hatred for me.”

“Why?”

“She treats me as a time waster.”

“What injustice,” Anselmo taunted.

“She is against gypsies.”

“What an error,” Anselmo said.

“She has gypsy blood,” Rafael said. “She knows of what she speaks.” He grinned. “But she has a tongue that scalds and that bites like a bull whip. With this tongue she takes the hide from anyone. In strips. She is of an unbelievable barbarousness.”

“How does she get along with the girl, Maria?” Robert Jordan asked.

“Good. She likes the girl. But let anyone come near her seriously —” He shook his head and clucked with his tongue.

“She is very good with the girl,” Anselmo said. “She takes good care of her.”

“When we picked the girl up at the time of the train she was very strange,” Rafael said. “She would not speak and she cried all the time and if anyone touched her she would shiver like a wet dog. Only lately has she been better. Lately she has been much better. Today she was fine. Just now, talking to you, she was very good. We would have left her after the train. Certainly it was not worth being delayed by something so sad and ugly and apparently worthless. But the old woman tied a rope to her and when the girl thought she could not go further, the old woman beat her with the end of the rope to make her go. Then when she could not really go further, the old woman carried her over her shoulder. When the old woman could not carry her, I carried her. We were going up that hill breast high in the gorse and heather. And when I could no longer carry her, Pablo carried her. But what the old woman had to say to us to make us do it!” He shook his head at the memory. “It is true that the girl is long in the legs but is not heavy. The bones are light and she weighs little. But she weighs enough when we had to carry her and stop to fire and then carry her again with the old woman lashing at Pablo with the rope and carrying his rifle, putting it in his hand when he would drop the girl, making him pick her up again and loading the gun for him while she cursed him; taking the shells from his pouches and shoving them down into the magazine and cursing him. The dusk was coming well on then and when the night came it was all right. But it was lucky that they had no cavalry.”

“It must have been very hard at the train,” Anselmo said. “I was not there,” he explained to Robert Jordan. “There was the band of Pablo, of El Sordo , whom we will see tonight, and two other bands of these mountains. I had gone to the other side of the lines.”

“In addition to the blond one with the rare name-” the gypsy said.

“Kashkin.”

“Yes. It is a name I can never dominate. We had two with a

machine gun. They were sent also by the army. They could not get the gun away and lost it. Certainly it weighed no more than that girl and if the old woman had been over them they would have gotten it away." He shook his head remembering, then went on. "Never in my life have I seen such a thing as when the explosion was produced. The train was coming steadily. We saw it far away. And I had an excitement so great that I cannot tell it. We saw steam from it and then later came the noise of the whistle. Then it came chu-chu-chu-chu-chu-chu steadily larger and larger and then, at the moment of the explosion, the front wheels of the engine rose up and all of the earth seemed to rise in a great cloud of blackness and a roar and the engine rose high in the cloud of dirt and of the wooden ties rising in the air as in a dream and then it fell onto its side like a great wounded animal and there was an explosion of white steam before the clods of the other explosion had ceased to fall on us and the *máquina* commenced to speak ta-tat-tat-ta!" went the gypsy shaking his two clenched fists up and down in front of him, thumbs up, on an imaginary machine gun. "Ta! Ta! Tat! Tat! Tat! Ta!" he exulted. "Never in my life have I seen such a thing, with the troops running from the train and the *máquina* speaking into them and the men falling. It was then that I put my hand on the *máquina* in my excitement and discovered that the barrel burned and at that moment the old woman slapped me on the side of the face and said, 'Shoot, you fool! Shoot or I will kick your brains in!' Then I commenced to shoot but it was very hard to hold my gun steady and the troops were running up the far hill. Later, after we had been down at the train to see what there was to take, an officer forced some troops back toward us at the point of a pistol. He kept waving the pistol and shouting at them and we were all shooting at him but no one hit him. Then some troops lay down and commenced firing and the officer walked up and down behind them with his pistol and still we could not hit him and the *máquina* could not fire on him because of the position of the train. This officer shot

two men as they lay and still they would not get up and he was cursing them and finally they got up, one two and three at a time and came running toward us and the train. Then they lay flat again and fired. Then we left, with the *máquina* still speaking over us as we left. It was then I found the girl where she had run from the train to the rocks and she ran with us. It was those troops who hunted us until that night."

"It must have been something very hard," Anselmo said. "Of much emotion."

"It was the only good thing we have done," said a deep voice.

"What are you doing now, you lazy drunken obscene unsayable son of an unnameable unmarried gypsy obscenity? What are you doing?"

Robert Jordan saw a woman of about fifty almost as big as Pablo, almost as wide as she was tall, in black peasant skirt and waist, with heavy wool socks on heavy legs, black rope-soled shoes and a brown face like a model for a granite monument. She had big but nice looking hands and her thick curly black hair was twisted into a knot on her neck.

"Answer me," she said to the gypsy, ignoring the others.

"I was talking to these comrades. This one comes as a dynamiter."

"I know all that," the *mujer* of Pablo said. "Get out of here now and relieve Andrés who is on guard at the top."

"Me voy, " the gypsy said. "I go." He turned to Robert Jordan. "I will see thee at the hour of eating."

"Not even in a joke," said the woman to him. "Three times you have eaten today according to my count. Go now and send me Andrés.

"Hola," she said to Robert Jordan and put out her hand and smiled. "How are you and how is everything in the Republic?"

"Good," he said and returned her strong hand grip. "Both with me and with the Republic."

“I am happy,” she told him. She was looking into his face and smiling and he noticed she had fine gray eyes. “Do you come for us to do another train?”

“No,” said Robert Jordan, trusting her instantly. “For a bridge.”

“No es nada,” she said. “A bridge is nothing. When do we do another train now that we have horses?”

“Later. This bridge is of great importance.”

“The girl told me your comrade who was with us at the train is dead.”

“Yes.”

“What a pity. Never have I seen such an explosion. He was a man of talent. He pleased me very much. It is not possible to do another train now? There are many men here now in the hills. Too many. It is already hard to get food. It would be better to get out. And we have horses.”

“We have to do this bridge.”

“Where is it?”

“Quite close.”

“All the better,” the *mujer* of Pablo said. “Let us blow all the bridges there are here and get out. I am sick of this place. Here is too much concentration of people. No good can come of it. Here is a stagnation that is repugnant.”

She sighted Pablo through the trees.

“Borracho!” she called to him. “Drunkard. Rotten drunkard!” She turned back to Robert Jordan cheerfully. “He’s taken a leather wine bottle to drink alone in the woods,” she said. “He’s drinking all the time. This life is ruining him. Young man, I am very content that you have come.” She clapped him on the back. “Ah,” she said. “You’re bigger than you look,” and ran her hand over his shoulder, feeling the muscle under the flannel shirt. “Good. I am very content that you have come.”

“And I equally.”

“We will understand each other,” she said. “Have a cup of wine.

“

“We have already had some,” Robert Jordan said. “But, will you?”

“Not until dinner,” she said. “It gives me heartburn.” Then she sighted Pablo again. *“Borracho!”* she shouted. “Drunkard!” She turned to Robert Jordan and shook her head. “He was a very good man,” she told him. “But now he is terminated. And listen to me about another thing. Be very good and careful about the girl. The Maria. She has had a bad time. Understandest thou?”

“Yes. Why do you say this?”

“I saw how she was from seeing thee when she came into the cave. I saw her watching thee before she came out.”

“I joked with her a little.”

“She was in a very bad state,” the woman of Pablo said. “Now she is better, she ought to get out of here.”

“Clearly, she can be sent through the lines with Anselmo.”

“You and the Anselmo can take her when this terminates.”

Robert Jordan felt the ache in his throat and his voice thickening. “That might be done,” he said.

The *mujer* of Pablo looked at him and shook her head. “Ayee. Ayee,” she said. “Are all men like that?”

“I said nothing. She is beautiful, you know that.”

“No she is not beautiful. But she begins to be beautiful, you mean,” the woman of Pablo said. “Men. It is a shame to us women that we make them. No. In seriousness. Are there not homes to care for such as her under the Republic?”

“Yes,” said Robert Jordan. “Good places. On the coast near Valencia. In other places too. There they will treat her well and she can work with children. There are the children from evacuated villages. They will teach her the work.”

“That is what I want,” the *mujer* of Pablo said. “Pablo has a sickness for her already. It is another thing which destroys him. It lies on him like a sickness when he sees her. It is best that she goes

now."

"We can take her after this is over."

"And you will be careful of her now if I trust you? I speak to you as though I knew you for a long time."

"It is like that," Robert Jordan said, "when people understand one another."

"Sit down," the woman of Pablo said. "I do not ask any promise because what will happen, will happen. Only if you will *not* take her out, then I ask a promise."

"Why if I would not take her?"

"Because I do not want her crazy here after you will go. I have had her crazy before and I have enough without that."

"We will take her after the bridge," Robert Jordan said. "If we are alive after the bridge, we will take her."

"I do not like to hear you speak in that manner. That manner of speaking never brings luck."

"I spoke in that manner only to make a promise," Robert Jordan said. "I am not of those who speak gloomily."

"Let me see thy hand," the woman said. Robert Jordan put his hand out and the woman opened it, held it in her own big hand, rubbed her thumb over it and looked at it, carefully, then dropped it. She stood up. He got up too and she looked at him without smiling.

"What did you see in it?" Robert Jordan asked her. "I don't believe in it. You won't scare me."

"Nothing," she told him. "I saw nothing in it."

"Yes you did. I am only curious. I do not believe in such things."

"In what do you believe?"

"In many things but not in that."

"In what?"

"In my work."

"Yes, I saw that."

"Tell me what else you saw."

“I saw nothing else,” she said bitterly. “The bridge is very difficult you said?”

“No. I said it is very important.”

“But it can be difficult?”

“Yes. And now I go down to look at it. How many men have you here?”

“Five that are any good. The gypsy is worthless although his intentions are good. He has a good heart. Pablo I no longer trust.”

“How many men has EI Sordo that are good?”

“Perhaps eight. We will see tonight. He is coming here. He is a very practical man. He also has some dynamite. Not very much, though. You will speak with him.”

“Have you sent for him?”

“He comes every night. He is a neighbor. Also a friend as well as a comrade.”

“What do you think of him?”

“He is a very good man. Also very practical. In the business of the train he was enormous.”

“And in the other bands?”

“Advising them in time, it should be possible to unite fifty rifles of a certain dependability.”

“How dependable?”

“Dependable within the gravity of the situation.”

“And how many cartridges per rifle?”

“Perhaps twenty. Depending how many they would bring for this business. If they would come for this business. Remember thee that in this of a bridge there is no money and no loot and in thy reservations of talking, much danger, and that afterwards there must be a moving from these mountains. Many will oppose this of the bridge.”

“Clearly.”

“In this way it is better not to speak of it unnecessarily.”

“I am in accord.”

“Then after thou hast studied thy bridge we will talk tonight with El Sordo .”

“I go down now with Anselmo.”

“Wake him then,” she said. “Do you want a carbine?”

“Thank you,” he told her. “It is good to have but I will not use it. I go to look, not to make disturbances. Thank you for what you have told me. I like very much your way of speaking.”

“I try to speak frankly.”

“Then tell me what you saw in the hand.”

“No,” she said and shook her head. “I saw nothing. Go now to thy bridge. I will look after thy equipment.”

“Cover it and that no one should touch it. It is better there than in the cave.”

“It shall be covered and no one shall touch it,” the woman of Pablo said. “Go now to thy bridge.”

“Anselmo,” Robert Jordan said, putting his hand on the shoulder of the old man who lay sleeping, his head on his arms.

The old man looked up. “Yes,” he said. “Of course. Let us go.”

Chapter Three

They came down the last two hundred yards, moving carefully from tree to tree in the shadows and now, through the last pines of the steep hillside, the bridge was only fifty yards away. The late afternoon sun that still came over the brown shoulder of the mountain showed the bridge dark against the steep emptiness of the gorge. It was a steel bridge of a single span and there was a sentry box at each end. It was wide enough for two motor cars to pass and it spanned, in solid-flung metal grace, a deep gorge at the bottom of which, far below, a brook leaped in white water through rocks and boulders down to the main stream of the pass. The sun was in Robert Jordan's eyes and the bridge showed only in outline. Then the sun lessened and was gone and looking up through the trees at the brown, rounded height that it had gone behind, he saw, now, that he no longer looked into the glare, that the mountain slope was a delicate new green and that there were patches of old snow under the crest.

Then he was watching the bridge again in the sudden short trueness of the little light that would be left, and studying its construction. The problem of its demolition was not difficult. As he watched he took out a notebook from his breast pocket and made several quick line sketches. As he made the drawings he did not figure the charges. He would do that later. Now he was noting the points where the explosive should be placed in order to cut the support of the span and drop a section of it into the gorge. It could be done unhurriedly, scientifically and correctly with a half dozen charges laid and braced to explode simultaneously; or it could be

done roughly with two big ones. They would need to be very big ones, on opposite sides and should go at the same time. He sketched quickly and happily; glad at last to have the problem under his hand; glad at last actually to be engaged upon it. Then he shut his notebook, pushed the pencil into its leather holder in the edge of the flap, put the notebook in his pocket and buttoned the pocket.

While he had sketched, Anselmo had been watching the road, the bridge and the sentry boxes. He thought they had come too close to the bridge for safety and when the sketching was finished, he was relieved.

As Robert Jordan buttoned the flap of his pocket and then lay flat behind the pine trunk, looking out from behind it, Anselmo put his hand on his elbow and pointed with one finger.

In the sentry box that faced toward them up the road, the sentry was sitting holding his rifle, the bayonet fixed, between his knees. He was smoking a cigarette and he wore a knitted cap and blanket style cape. At fifty yards, you could not see anything about his face. Robert Jordan put up his field glasses, shading the lenses carefully with his cupped hands even though there was now no sun to make a glint, and there was the rail of the bridge as clear as though you could reach out and touch it and there was the face of the senty so clear he could see the sunken cheeks, the ash on the cigarette and the greasy shine of the bayonet. It was a peasant's face, the cheeks hollow under the high cheekbones, the beard stubbled, the eyes shaded by the heavy brows, big hands holding the rifle, heavy boots showing beneath the folds of the blanket cape. There was a worn, blackened leather wine bottle on the wall of the sentry box, there were some newspapers and there was no telephone. There could, of course, be a telephone on the side he could not see; but there were no wires running from the box that were visible. A telephone line ran along the road and its wires were carried over the bridge. There was a charcoal brazier outside the sentry box, made from an old petrol tin with the top cut off and holes punched in it, which rested

on two stones; but he held no fire. There were some fire-blackened empty tins in the ashes under it.

Robert Jordan handed the glasses to Anselmo who lay flat beside him. The old man grinned and shook his head. He tapped his skull beside his eye with one finger.

"Ya lo veo," he said in Spanish. "I have seen him," speaking from the front of his mouth with almost no movement of his lips in the way that is quieter than any whisper. He looked at the sentry as Robert Jordan smiled at him and, pointing with one finger, drew the other across his throat. Robert Jordan nodded but he did not smile.

The sentry box at the far end of the bridge faced away from them and down the road and they could not see into it. The road, which was broad and oiled and well constructed, made a turn to the left at the far end of the bridge and then swung out of sight around a curve to the right. At this point it was enlarged from the old road to its present width by cutting into the solid bastion of the rock on the far side of the gorge; and its left or western edge, looking down from the pass and the bridge, was marked and protected by a line of upright cut blocks of stone where its edge fell sheer away to the gorge. The gorge was almost a canyon here, where the brook, that the bridge was flung over, merged with the main stream of the pass.

"And the other post?" Robert Jordan asked Anselmo.

"Five hundred meters below that turn. In the road mender's hut that is built into the side of the rock."

"How many men?" Robert Jordan asked.

He was watching the sentry again with his glasses. The sentry rubbed his cigarette out on the plank wall of the box, then took a leather tobacco pouch from his pocket, opened the paper of the dead cigarette and emptied the remnant of used tobacco into the pouch. The sentry stood up, leaned his rifle against the wall of the box and stretched, then picked up his rifle, slung it over his shoulder and walked out onto the bridge. Anselmo flattened on the

ground and Robert Jordan slipped his glasses into his shirt pocket and put his head well behind the pine tree.

"There are seven men and a corporal," Anselmo said close to his ear. "I informed myself from the gypsy."

"We will go now as soon as he is quiet," Robert Jordan said. "We are too close."

"Hast thou seen what thou needest?"

"Yes. All that I need."

It was getting cold quickly now with the sun down and the light was failing as the afterglow from the last sunlight on the mountains behind them faded.

"How does it look to thee?" Anselmo said softly as they watched the sentry walk across the bridge toward the other box, his bayonet bright in the last of the afterglow, his figure unshapely in the blanket coat.

"Very good," Robert Jordan said. "Very, very good."

"I am glad," Anselmo said. "Should we go? Now there is no chance that he sees us."

The sentry was standing, his back toward them, at the far end of the bridge. From the gorge came the noise of the stream in the boulders. Then through this noise came another noise, a steady, racketing drone and they saw the sentry looking up, his knitted cap slanted back, and turning their heads and looking up they saw, high in the evening sky, three monoplanes in V formation, showing minute and silvery at that height where there still was sun, passing unbelievably quickly across the sky, their motors now throbbing steadily.

"Ours?" Anselmo asked.

"They seem so," Robert Jordan said but knew that at that height you never could be sure. They could be an evening patrol of either side. But you always said pursuit planes were ours because it made people feel better. Bombers were another matter.

Anselmo evidently felt the same. "They are ours," he said. "I

recognize them. They are *Moscas."*

"Good," said Robert Jordan. "They seem to me to be *Moscas,* too."

"They are *Moscas,"* Anselmo said.

Robert Jordan could have put the glasses on them and been sure instantly but he preferred not to. It made no difference to him who they were tonight and if it pleased the old man to have them be ours, he did not want to take them away. Now, as they moved out of sight toward Segovia, they did not look to be the green, red wing-tipped, low wing Russian conversion of the Boeing P32 that the Spaniards called *Moscas.* You could not see the colors but the cut was wrong. No. It was a Fascist Patrol coming home.

The sentry was still standing at the far box with his back turned.

"Let us go," Robert Jordan said. He started up the hill, moving carefully and taking advantage of the cover until they were out of sight. Anselmo followed him at a hundred yards distance. When they were well out of sight of the bridge, he stopped and the old man came up and went into the lead and climbed steadily through the pass, up the steep slope in the dark.

"We have a formidable aviation," the old man said happily.

"Yes."

"And we will win."

"We have to win."

"Yes. And after we have won you must come to hunt."

"To hunt what?"

"The boar, the bear, the wolf, the ibex—"

"You like to hunt?"

"Yes, man. More than anything. We all hunt in my village. You do not like to hunt?"

"No," said Robert Jordan. "I do not like to kill animals."

"With me it is the opposite," the old man said. "I do not like to kill men."

"Nobody does except those who are disturbed in the head,"

Robert Jordan said. “But I feel nothing against it when it is necessary. When it is for the cause.”

“It is a different thing, though,” Anselmo said. “In my house, when I had a house, and now I have no house, there were the tusks of boar I had shot in the lower forest. There were the hides of wolves I had shot. In the winter, hunting them in the snow. One very big one, I killed at dusk in the outskirts of the village on my way home one night in November. There were four wolf hides on the floor of my house. They were worn by stepping on them but they were wolf hides. There were the horns of ibex that I had killed in the high Sierra, and there was an eagle stuffed by an embalmer of birds of Avila, with his wings spread, and eyes as yellow and real as the eyes of an eagle alive. It was a very beautiful thing and all of those things gave me great pleasure to contemplate.”

“Yes,” said Robert Jordan.

“On the door of the church of my village was nailed the paw of a bear that I killed in the spring, finding him on a hillside in the snow, overturning a log with this same paw.”

“When was this?”

“Six years ago. And every time I saw that paw, like the hand of a man, but with those long claws, dried and nailed through the palm to the door of the church, I received a pleasure.”

“Of pride?”

“Of pride of remembrance of the encounter with the bear on that hillside in the early spring. But of the killing of a man, who is a man as we are, there is nothing good that remains.”

“You can’t nail his paw to the church,” Robert Jordan said.

“No. Such a barbarity is unthinkable. Yet the hand of a man is like the paw of a bear.”

“So is the chest of a man like the chest of a bear,” Robert Jordan said. “With the hide removed from the bear, there are many similarities in the muscles.”

“Yes,” Anselmo said. “The gypsies believe the bear to be a

brother of man."

"So do the Indians in America," Robert Jordan said. "And when they kill a bear they apologize to him and ask his pardon. They put his skull in a tree and they ask him to forgive them before they leave it."

"The gypsies believe the bear to be a brother to man because he has the same body beneath his hide, because he drinks beer, because he enjoys music and because he likes to dance."

"So also believe the Indians."

"Are the Indians then gypsies?"

"No. But they believe alike about the bear."

"Clearly. The gypsies also believe he is a brother because he steals for pleasure."

"Have you gypsy blood?"

"No. But I have seen much of them and clearly, since the movement, more. There are many in the hills. To them it is not a sin to kill outside the tribe. They deny this but it is true."

"Like the Moors."

"Yes. But the gypsies have many laws they do not admit to having. In the war many gypsies have become bad again as they were in olden times."

"They do not understand why the war is made. They do not know for what we fight."

"No," Anselmo said. "They only know now there is a war and people may kill again as in the olden times without a surety of punishment."

"You have killed?" Robert Jordan asked in the intimacy of the dark and of their day together.

"Yes. Several times. But not with pleasure. To me it is a sin to kill a man. Even Fascists whom we must kill. To me there is a great difference between the bear and the man and I do not believe the wizardry of the gypsies about the brotherhood with animals. No. I am against all killing of men."

“Yet you have killed.”

“Yes. And will again. But if I live later, I will try to live in such a way, doing no harm to anyone, that it will be forgiven.”

“By whom?”

“Who knows? Since we do not have God here any more, neither His Son nor the Holy Ghost, who forgives? I do not know.”

“You have not God any more?”

“No. Man. Certainly not. If there were God, never would He have permitted what I have seen with my eyes. Let *them* have God.”

“They claim Him.”

“Clearly I miss Him, having been brought up in religion. But now a man must be responsible to himself.”

“Then it is thyself who will forgive thee for killing.”

“I believe so,” Anselmo said. “Since you put it clearly in that way I believe that must be it. But with or without God, I think it is a sin to kill. To take the life of another is to me very grave. I will do it whenever necessary but I am not of the race of Pablo.”

“To win a war we must kill our enemies. That has always been true.”

“Clearly. In war we must kill. But I have very rare ideas,” Anselmo said.

They were walking now close together in the dark and he spoke softly, sometimes turning his head as he climbed. “I would not kill even a Bishop. I would not kill a proprietor of any kind. I would make them work each day as we have worked in the fields and as we work in the mountains with the timber, all of the rest of their lives. So they would see what man is born to. That they should sleep where we sleep. That they should eat as we eat. But above all that they should work. Thus they would learn.”

“And they would survive to enslave thee again.”

“To kill them teaches nothing,” Anselmo said. “You cannot exterminate them because from their seed comes more with greater hatred. Prison is nothing. Prison only makes hatred. That all our

enemies should learn."

"But still thou hast killed."

"Yes," Anselmo said. "Many times and will again. But not with pleasure and regarding it as a sin."

"And the sentry. You joked of killing the sentry."

"That was in joke. I would kill the sentry. Yes. Certainly and with a clear heart considering our task. But not with pleasure."

"We will leave them to those who enjoy it," Robert Jordan said.

"There are eight and five. That is thirteen for those who enjoy it."

"There are many of those who enjoy it," Anselmo said in the dark. "We have many of those. More of those than of men who would serve for a battle."

"Hast thou ever been in a battler"

"Nay," the old man said. "We fought in Segovia at the start of the movement but we were beaten and we ran. I ran with the others. We did not truly understand what we were doing, nor how it should be done. Also I had only a shotgun with cartridges of large buckshot and the *guardia civil* had Mausers. I could not hit them with buckshot at a hundred yards, and at three hundred yards they shot us as they wished as though we were rabbits. They shot much and well and we were like sheep before them." He was silent. Then asked, "Thinkest thou there will be a battle at the bridger"

"There is a chance."

"I have never seen a battle without running," Anselmo said. "I do not know how I would comport myself. I am an old man and I have wondered."

"I will respond for thee," Robert Jordan told him.

"And hast thou been in many battles?"

"Several."

"And what thinkest thou of this of the bridger"

"First I think of the bridge. That is my business. It is not difficult to destroy the bridge. Then we will make the dispositions for the

rest. For the preliminaries. It will all be written."

"Very few of these people read," Anselmo said.

"It will be written for everyone's knowledge so that all know, but also it will be clearly explained."

"I will do that to which I am assigned," Anselmo said. "But remembering the shooting in Segovia, if there is to be a battle or even much exchanging of shots, I would wish to have it very clear what I must do under all circumstances to avoid running. I remember that I had a great tendency to run at Segovia."

"We will be together," Robert Jordan told him. "I will tell you what there is to do at all times."

"Then there is no problem," Anselmo said. "I can do anything that I am ordered."

"For us will be the bridge and the battle, should there be one," Robert Jordan said and saying it in the dark, he felt a little theatrical but it sounded well in Spanish.

"It should be of the highest interest," Anselmo said and hearing him say it honestly and clearly and with no pose, neither the English pose of understatement nor any Latin bravado, Robert Jordan thought he was very lucky to have this old man and having seen the bridge and worked out and simplified the problem it would have been to surprise the posts and blow it in a normal way, he resented Golz's orders, and the necessity for them. He resented them for what they could do to him and for what they could do to this old man. They were bad orders all right for those who would have to carry them out.

And that is not the way to think, he told himself, and there is not you, and there are no people that things must not happen to. Neither you nor this old man is anything. You are instruments to do your duty. There are necessary orders that are no fault of yours and there is a bridge and that bridge can be the point on which the future of the human race can turn. As it can turn on everything that happens in this war. You have only one thing to do and you must

do it. Only one thing, hell, he thought. If it were one thing it was easy. Stop worrying, you windy bastard, he said to himself. Think about something else.

So he thought about the girl Maria, with her skin, the hair and the eyes all the same golden tawny brown, the hair a little darker than the rest but it would be lighter as her skin tanned deeper, the smooth skin, pale gold on the surface with a darkness underneath. Smooth it would be, all of her body smooth, and she moved awkwardly as though there were something of her and about her that embarrassed her as though it were visible, though it was not, but only in her mind. And she blushed when he looked at her, and she sitting, her hands clasped around her knees and the shirt open at the throat, the cup of her breasts uptilted against the shirt, and as he thought of her, his throat was choky and there was a difficulty in walking and he and Anselmo spoke no more until the old man said, "Now we go down through these rocks and to the camp."

As they came through the rocks in the dark, a man spoke to them, "Halt. Who goes?" They heard a rifle bolt snick as it was drawn back and then the knock against the wood as it was pushed forward and down on the stock.

"Comrades," Anselmo said.

"What comrades?"

"Comrades of Pablo," the old man told him. "Dost thou not know us?"

"Yes," the voice said. "But it is an order. Have you the password?"

"No. We come from below."

"I know," the man said in the dark. "You come from the bridge.

I know all of that. The order is not mine. You must know the second half of a password."

"What is the first half then?" Robert Jordan said.

"I have forgotten it," the man said in the dark and laughed. "Go then unprintably to the campfire with thy obscene dynamite."

“That is called guerilla discipline,” Anselmo said. “Uncock thy piece.”

“It is uncocked,” the man said in the dark. “I let it down with my thumb and forefinger.”

“Thou wilt do that with a Mauser sometime which has no knurl on the bolt and it will fire.”

“This is a Mauser,” the man said. “But I have a grip of thumb and forefinger beyond description. Always I let it down that way.”

“Where is the rifle pointed?” asked Anselmo into the dark.

“At thee,” the man said, “all the time that I descended the bolt.

And when thou comest to the camp, order that some one should relieve me because I have indescribable and unprintable hunger and I have forgotten the password.”

“How art thou called?” Robert Jordan asked.

“Agustín,” the man said. “I am called Agustín and I am dying with boredom in this spot.”

“We will take the message,” Robert Jordan said and he thought how the word *aburmiento* which means boredom in Spanish was a word no peasant would use in any other language. Yet it is one of the most common words in the mouth of a Spaniard of any class.

“Listen to me,” Agustín said, and coming close he put his hand on Robert Jordan’s shoulder. Then striking a flint and steel together he held it up and blowing on the end of the cork, looked at the young man’s face in its glow.

“You look like the other one,” he said. “But something different. Listen,” he put the lighter down and stood holding his rifle. “Tell me this. Is it true about the bridge?”

“What about the bridge?”

“That we blow up an obscene bridge and then have to obscenely well obscenity ourselves off out of these mountains?”

“I know not.”

“*You* know not,” Agustín said. “What a barbarity! Whose then is the dynamite?”

“Mine.”

“And knowest thou not what it is for? Don’t tell me tales.”

“I know what it is for and so will you in time,” Robert Jordan said. “But , now we go to the camp.”

“Go to the unprintable,” Agustín said. “And unprint thyself. But do you want me to tell you something of service to you?”

“Yes,” said Robert Jordan. “If it is not unprintable,” naming the principal obscenity that had larded the conversation. The man, Agustín, spoke so obscenely, coupling an obscenity to every noun as an adjective, using the same obscenity as a verb, that Robert Jordan wondered if he could speak a straight sentence. Agustín laughed in the dark when he heard the word. “It is a way of speaking I have. Maybe it is ugly. Who knows? Each one speaks according to his manner. Listen to me. The bridge is nothing to me. As well the bridge as another thing. Also I have a boredom in these mountains. That we should go if it is needed. These mountains say nothing to me. That we should leave them. But I would say one thing. Guard well thy explosive.”

“Thank you,” Robert Jordan said. “From thee?”

“No,” Agustín said. “From people less unprintably equipped than I.”

“So?” asked Robert Jordan.

“You understand Spanish,” Agustín said seriously now. “Care well for thy unprintable explosive.”

“Thank you.”

“No. Don’t thank me. Look after thy stuff.”

“Has anything happened to it?”

“No, or I would not waste thy time talking in this fashion.”

“Thank you all the same. We go now to camp.”

“Good,” said Agustín, “and that they send some one here who knows the password.”

“Will we see you at the camp?”

“Yes, man. And shortly.”

“Come on,” Robert Jordan said to Anselmo.

They were walking down the edge of the meadow now and there was a gray mist. The grass was lush underfoot after the pine-needle floor of the forest and the dew on the grass wet through their canvas rope-soled shoes. Ahead, through the trees, Robert Jordan could see a light where he knew the mouth of the cave must be.

“Agustín is a very good man,” Anselmo said. “He speaks very filthily and always in jokes but he is a very serious man.”

“You know him well?”

“Yes. For a long time. I have much confidence in him.”

“And what he says?”

“Yes, man. This Pablo is bad now, as you could see.”

“And the best thing to do?”

“One shall guard it at all times.”

“Who?”

“You. Me. The woman and Agustín. Since he sees the danger.”

“Did you think things were as bad as they are here?”

“No,” Anselmo said. “They have gone bad very fast. But it was necessary to come here. This is the country of Pablo and of El Sordo. In their country we must deal with them unless it is something that can be done alone.”

“And El Sordo?”

“Good,” Anselmo said. “As good as the other is bad.”

“You believe now that he is truly bad?”

“All afternoon I have thought of it and since we have heard what we have heard, I think now, yes. Truly.”

“It would not be better to leave, speaking of another bridge, and obtain men from other bands?”

“No,” Anselmo said. “This is his country. You could not move that he would not know it. But one must move with much precautions.”

Chapter Four

They came down to the mouth of the cave, where a light shone out from the edge of a blanket that hung over the opening. The two packs were at the foot of the tree covered with a canvas and Robert Jordan knelt down and felt the canvas wet and stiff over them. In the dark he felt under the canvas in the outside pocket of one of the packs and took out a leather-covered flask and slipped it in his pocket. Unlocking the long barred padlocks that passed through the grommet that closed the opening of the mouth of the packs, and untying the drawstring at the top of each pack, he felt inside them and verified their contents with his hands. Deep in one pack he felt the bundled blocks in the sacks, the sacks wrapped in the sleeping robe, and tying the strings of that and pushing the lock shut again, he put his hands into the other and felt the sharp wood outline of the box of the old exploder, the cigar box with the caps, each little cylinder wrapped round and round with its two wires (the lot of them packed as carefully as he had packed his collection of wild bird eggs when he was a boy), the stock of the submachine gun, disconnected from the barrel and wrapped in his leather jacket, the two pans and five clips in one of the inner pockets of the big pack-sack and the small coils of copper wire and the big coil of light insulated wire in the other. In the pocket with the wire he felt his pliers and the two wooden awls for making holes in the end of the blocks and then, from the last inside pocket, he took a big box of the Russian cigarettes of the lot he had from Golz's headquarters and tying the mouth of the pack shut, he pushed the lock in, buckled the flaps down and again covered both packs with the

canvas. Anselmo had gone on into the cave.

Robert Jordan stood up to follow him, then reconsidered and, lifting the canvas off the two packs, picked them up, one in each hand, and started with them, just able to carry them, for the mouth of the cave. He laid one pack down and lifted the blanket aside, then with his head stooped and with a pack in each hand, carrying by the leather shoulder straps, he went into the cave.

It was warm and smoky in the cave. There was a table along one wall with a tallow candle stuck in a bottle on it and at the table were seated Pablo, three men he did not know, and the gypsy, Rafael. The candle made shadows on the wall behind the men and Anselmo stood where he had come in to the right of the table. The wife of Pablo was standing over the charcoal fire on the open fire hearth in the corner of the cave. The girl knelt by her stirring in an iron pot. She lifted the wooden spoon out and looked at Robert Jordan as he stood there in the doorway and he saw, in the glow from the fire the woman was blowing with a bellows, the girl's face, her arm and the drops running down from the spoon and dropping into the iron pot.

"What do you carry?" Pablo said.

"My things," Robert Jordan said and set the two packs down a little way apart where the cave opened out on the side away from the table.

"Are they not well outside?" Pablo asked.

"Some one might trip over them in the dark," Robert Jordan said and walked over to the table and laid the box of cigarettes on it.

"I do not like to have dynamite here in the cave," Pablo said.

"It is far from the fire," Robert Jordan said. "Take some cigarettes." He ran his thumbnail along the side of the paper box with the big colored figure of a warship on the cover and pushed the box toward Pablo.

Anselmo brought him a rawhide-covered stool and he sat down

at the table. Pablo looked at him as though he were going to speak again, then reached for the cigarettes.

Robert Jordan pushed them toward the others. He was not looking at them yet. But he noted one man took cigarettes and two did not. All of his concentration was on Pablo.

"How goes it, gypsy?" he said to Rafael.

"Good," the gypsy said. Robert Jordan could tell they had been talking about him when he came in. Even the gypsy was not at ease.

"She is going to let you eat again?" Robert Jordan asked the gypsy.

"Yes. Why not?" the gypsy said. It was a long way from the friendly joking they had together in the afternoon.

The woman of Pablo said nothing and went on blowing up the coals of the fire.

"One called Agustín says he dies of boredom above," Robert Jordan said.

"That doesn't kill," Pablo said. "Let him die a little."

"Is there wine?" Robert Jordan asked the table at large, leaning forward, his hands on the table.

"There is little left," Pablo said sullenly. Robert Jordan decided he had better look at the other three and try to see where he stood.

"In that case, let me have a cup of water. Thou," he called to the girl. "Bring me a cup of water."

The girl looked at the woman, who said nothing, and gave no sign of having heard, then she went to a kettle containing water and dipped a cup full. She brought it to the table and put it down before him. Robert Jordan smiled at her. At the same time he sucked in on his stomach muscles and swung a little to the left on his stool so that his pistol slipped around on his belt closer to where he wanted it. He reached his hand down toward his hip pocket and Pablo watched him. He knew they all were watching him, too, but he watched only Pablo. His hand came up from the hip pocket with the leather-covered flask and he unscrewed the top and then, lifting the

cup, drank half the water and poured very slowly from the flask into the cup.

“It is too strong for thee or I would give thee some,” he said to the girl and smiled at her again. “There is little left or I would offer some to thee,” he said to Pablo.

“I do not like anis,” Pablo said.

The acrid smell had carried across the table and he had picked out the one familiar component.

“Good,” said Robert Jordan. “Because there is very little left.”

“What drink is that?” the gypsy asked.

“A medicine,” Robert Jordan said. “Do you want to taste it?”

“What is it for?”

“For everything,” Robert Jordan said. “It cures everything. If you have anything wrong this will cure it.”

“Let me taste it,” the gypsy said.

Robert Jordan pushed the cup toward him. It was a milky yellow now with the water and he hoped the gypsy would not take more than a swallow. There was very little of it left and one cup of it took the place of the evening papers, of all the old evenings in cafes, of all chestnut trees that would be in bloom now in this month, of the great slow horses of the outer boulevards, of book shops, of kiosques, and of galleries, of the Pare Montsouris, of the Stade Buffalo, and of the Butte Chaumont, of the Guaranty Trust Company and the Ile de la Cité, of Foyot›s old hotel, and of being able to read and relax in the evening; of all the things he had enjoyed and forgotten and that came back to him when he tasted that opaque, bitter, tongue-numbing, brain-warming, stomachwarming, idea-changing liquid alchemy.

The gypsy made a face and handed the cup back. “It smells of anis but it is bitter as gall,” he said. “It is better to be sick than have that medicine.”

“That›s the wormwood,” Robert Jordan told him. “In this, the real absinthe, there is wormwood. It›s supposed to rot your brain

out but I don›t believe it. It only changes the ideas. You should pour water into it very slowly, a few drops at a time. But I poured it into the water."

"What are you saying?" Pablo said angrily, feeling the mockery.

"Explaining the medicine," Robert Jordan told him and grinned."I bought it in Madrid. It was the last bottle and it›s lasted me three weeks." He took a big swallow of it and felt it coasting over his tongue in delicate ansesthesia, He looked at Pablo and grinned agam.

"How›s business?" he asked.

Pablo did not answer and Robert Jordan looked carefully at the other three men at the table. One had a large flat face, flat and brown as a Serrano ham with a nose flattened and broken, and the long thin Russian cigarette, projecting at an angle, made the face look even flatter. This man had short gray hair and a gray stubble of beard and wore the usual black smock buttoned at the neck. He looked down at the table when Robert Jordan looked at him but his eyes were steady and they did not blink. The other two were evidently brothers. They looked much alike and were both short, heavily built, dark haired, their hair growing low on their fore heads, dark-eyed and brown. One had a scar across his forehead above his left eye and as he looked at them, they looked back at him steadily. One looked to be about twenty-six or -eight, the other perhaps two years older.

"What are you looking at?" one brother, the one with the scar, asked.

"Thee," Robert Jordan said.

"Do you see anything rarer"

"No," said Robert Jordan. "Have a cigarette?"

"Why not?" the brother said. He had not taken any before.

"These are like the other had. He of the train."

"Were you at the train?"

"We were all at the train," the brother said quietly. "All except

the old man."

"That is what we should do now," Pablo said. "Another train."

"We can do that," Robert Jordan said. "After the bridge."

He could see that the wife of Pablo had turned now from the fire and was listening. When he said the word bridge everyone was quiet.

"After the bridge," he said again deliberately and took a sip of the absinthe. I might as well bring it on, he thought. It's coming anyway.

"I do not go for the bridge," Pablo said, looking down at the table. "Neither me nor my people."

Robert Jordan said nothing. He looked at Anselmo and raised the cup. "Then we shall do it alone, old one," he said and smiled.

"Without this coward," Anselmo said.

"What did you say?" Pablo spoke to the old man.

"Nothing for thee. I did not speak to thee," Anselmo told him.

Robert Jordan now looked past the table to where the wife of Pablo was standing by the fire. She had said nothing yet, nor given any sign. But now she said something he could not hear to the girl and the girl rose from the cooking fire, slipped along the wall, opened the blanket that hung over the mouth of the cave and went out. I think it is going to come now, Robert Jordan thought. I believe this is it. I did not want it to be this way but this seems to be the way it is.

"Then we will do the bridge without thy aid," Robert Jordan said to Pablo.

"No," Pablo said, and Robert Jordan watched his face sweat. "Thou wilt blow no bridge here."

"No?"

"Thou wilt blow no bridge," Pablo said heavily.

"And thou?" Robert Jordan spoke to the wife of Pablo who was standing, still and huge, by the fire. She turned toward them and said, "I am for the bridge." Her face was lit by the fire and it was

flushed and it shone warm and dark and handsome now in the firelight as it was meant to be.

"What do you say?" Pablo said to her and Robert Jordan saw the betrayed look on his face and the sweat on his forehead as he turned his head.

"I am for the bridge and against thee," the wife of Pablo said. "Nothing more."

"I am also for the bridge," the man with the flat face and the broken nose said, crushing the end of the cigarette on the table.

"To me the bridge means nothing," one of the brothers said. "I am for the *mujer* of Pablo."

"Equally," said the other brother.

"Equally," the gypsy said.

Robert Jordan watched Pablo and as he watched, letting his right hand hang lower and lower, ready if it should be necessary, half hoping it would be (feeling perhaps that were the simplest and easiest yet not wishing to spoil what had gone so well, knowing how quickly all of a family, all of a clan, all of a band, can turn against a stranger in a quarrel, yet thinking what could be done with the hand were the simplest and best and surgically the most sound now that this had happened), saw also the wife of Pablo standing there and watched her blush proudly and soundly and healthily as the allegiances were given.

"I am for the Republic," the woman of Pablo said happily. "And the Republic is the bridge. Afterwards we will have time for other projects."

"And thou," Pablo said bitterly. "With your head of a seed bull and your heart of a whore. Thou thinkest there will be an after wards from this bridge? Thou hast an idea of that which will pass?"

"That which must pass," the woman of Pablo said. "That which must pass, will pass."

"And it means nothing to thee to be hunted then like a beast after this thing from which we derive no profit? Nor to die in it?"

“Nothing,” the woman of Pablo said. “And do not try to frighten me, coward.”

“Coward,” Pablo said bitterly. “You treat a man as coward because he has a tactical sense. Because he can see the results of an idiocy in advance. It is not cowardly to know what is foolish.”

“Neither is it foolish to know what is cowardly,” said Anselmo, unable to resist making the phrase.

“Do you want to die?” Pablo said to him seriously and Robert Jordan saw how unrhetorical was the question.

“No.”

“Then watch thy mouth. You talk too much about things you do not understand. Don’t you see that this is serious?” he said almost pitifully. “Am I the only one who sees the seriousness of this?”

I believe so, Robert Jordan thought. Old Pablo, old boy, I believe so. Except me. You can see it and I see it and the woman read it in my hand but she doesn’t see it, yet. Not yet she doesn’t see it.

“Am I a leader for nothing?” Pablo asked. “I know what I speak of. You others do not know. This old man talks nonsense. He is an old man who is nothing but a messenger and a guide for foreigners. This foreigner comes here to do a thing for the good of the foreigners. For his good we must be sacrificed. I am for the good and the safety of all.”

“Safety,” the wife of Pablo said. “There is no such thing as safety. There are so many seeking safety here now that they make a great danger. In seeking safety now you lose all.”

She stood now by the table with the big spoon in her hand.

“There is safety,” Pablo said. “Within the danger there is the safety of knowing what chances to take. It is like the bullfighter who knowing what he is doing, takes no chances and is safe.”

“Until he is gored,” the woman said bitterly. “How many times have I heard matadors talk like that before they took a goring. How often have I heard Finito say that it is all knowledge and that the bull never gored the man; rather the man gored himself on the horn

of the bull. Always do they talk that way in their arrogance before a goring. Afterwards we visit them in the clinic." Now she was mimicking a visit to a bedside, "'Hello, old timer. Hello," she boomed. Then, *"<Buenas, Compadre.* How goes it, Pilar?'" imitating the weak voice of the wounded bullfighter. "'How did this happen, Finito, *Chico,* how did this dirty accident occur to thee?" booming it out in her own voice. Then talking weak and small, "Tt is nothing, woman. Pilar, it is nothing. It shouldn't have happened. I killed him very well, you understand. Nobody could have killed him better. Then having killed him exactly as I should and him absolutely dead, swaying on his legs, and ready to fall of his own weight, I walked away from him with a certain amount of arrogance and much style and from the back he throws me this horn between the cheeks of my buttocks and it comes out of my liver.!' She commenced to laugh, dropping the imitation of the almost effeminate bullfighter's voice and booming again now. "You and your safety! Did I live nine years with three of the worst paid matadors in the world not to learn about fear and about safety? Speak to me of anything but safety. And thee. What illusions I put in thee and how they have turned out! From one year of war thou has become lazy, a drunkard and a coward."

"In that way thou hast no right to speak," Pablo said. "And less even before the people and a stranger."

"In that way will I speak," the wife of Pablo went on. "Have you not heard? Do you still believe that you command here?"

"Yes," Pablo said. "Here I command."

"Not in joke," the woman said. "Here I command! Haven't you heard l*a gente?* Here no one commands but me. You can stay if you wish and eat of the food and drink of the wine, but not too bloody much, and share in the work if thee wishes. But here I command."

"I should shoot thee and the foreigner both," Pablo said sullenly.

"Try it," the woman said. "And see what happens."

"A cup of water for me," Robert Jordan said, not taking his eyes

from the man with his sullen heavy head and the woman standing proudly and confidently holding the big spoon as authoritatively as though it were a baton.

"Maria," called the woman of Pablo and when the girl came in the door she said, "Water for this comrade."

Robert Jordan reached for his flask and, bringing the flask out, as he brought it he loosened the pistol in the holster and swung it on top of his thigh. He poured a second absinthe into his cup and took the cup of water the girl brought him and commenced to drip it into the cup, a little at a time. The girl stood at his elbow, watching him.

"Outside," the woman of Pablo said to her, gesturing with the spoon.

"It is cold outside," the girl said, her cheek close to Robert Jordan's, watching what was happening in the cup where the liquor was clouding.

"Maybe," the woman of Pablo said. "But in here it is too hot." Then she said, kindly, "It is not for long."

The girl shook her head and went out.

I don't think he is going to take this much more, Robert Jordan thought to himself. He held the cup in one hand and his other hand rested, frankly now, on the pistol. He had slipped the safety catch and he felt the worn comfort of the checked grip chafed almost smooth and touched the round, cool companionship of the trigger guard. Pablo no longer looked at him but only at the woman. She went on, "Listen to me, drunkard. You understand who commands here?"

"I command."

"No. Listen. Take the wax from thy hairy ears. Listen well. I command."

Pablo looked at her and you could tell nothing of what he was thinking by his face. He looked at her quite deliberately and then he looked across the table at Robert Jordan. He looked at him a long

time contemplatively and then he looked back at the woman, again.

"All right. You command," he said. "And if you want he can command too. And the two of you can go to hell." He was look- ing the woman straight in the face and he was neither dominated by her nor seemed to be much affected by her. "It is possible that I am lazy and that I drink too much. You may consider me a coward but there you are mistaken. But I am not stupid." He paused. "That you should command and that you should like it. Now if you are a woman as well as a commander, that we should have something to eat."

"Maria," the woman of Pablo called.

The girl put her head inside the blanket across the cave mouth. "Enter now and serve the supper."

The girl came in and walked across to the low table by the hearth and picked up the enameled-ware bowls and brought them to the table.

"There is wine enough for all," the woman of Pablo said to Robert Jordan. "Pay no attention to what that drunkard says. When this is finished we will get more. Finish that rare thing thou art drinking and take a cup of wine."

Robert Jordan swallowed down the last of the absinthe, feeling it, gulped that way, making a warm, small, fume-rising, wet, chemical-change-producing heat in him and passed the cup for wine. The girl dipped it full for him and smiled.

"Well, did you see the bridge?" the gypsy asked. The others, who had not opened their mouths after the change of allegiance, were all leaning forward to listen now.

"Yes," Robert Jordan said. "It is something easy to do. Would you like me to show you?"

"Yes, man. With much interest."

Robert Jordan took out the notebook from his shirt pocket and showed them the sketches.

"Look how it seems," the flat-faced man, who was named

Primitivo, said. “It is the bridge itself.”

Robert Jordan with the point of the pencil explained how the bridge should be blown and the reason for the placing of the charges.

“What simplicity,” the scarred-faced brother, who was called Andrés, said. “And how do you explode them?”

Robert Jordan explained that too and, as he showed them, he felt the girl›s arm resting on his shoulder as she looked. The woman of Pablo was watching too. Only Pablo took no interest, sitting by himself with a cup of wine that he replenished by dipping into the big bowl Maria had filled from the wineskin that hung to the left of the entrance to the cave.

“Hast thou done much of this?” the girl asked Robert Jordan softly.

“Yes.”

“And can we see the doing of it?”

“Yes. Why not?”

“You will see it,” Pablo said from his end of the table. “I believe that you will see it.”

“Shut up,” the woman of Pablo said to him and suddenly remembering what she had seen in the hand in the afternoon she was wildly, unreasonably angry. “Shut up, coward. Shut up, bad luck bird. Shut up, murderer.”

“Good,” Pablo said. “I shut up. It is thou who commands now and you should continue to look at the pretty pictures. But remember that I am not stupid.”

The woman of Pablo could feel her rage changing to sorrow and to a feeling of the thwarting of all hope and promise. She knew this feeling from when she was a girl and she knew the things that caused it all through her life. It came now suddenly and she put it away from her and would not let it touch her, neither her nor the Republic, and she said, “Now we will eat. Serve the bowls from the pot, Maria.”

Chapter Five

Robert Jordan pushed aside the saddle blanket that hung over the mouth of the cave and, stepping out, took a deep breath of the cold night air. The mist had cleared away and the stars were out. There was no wind, and, outside now of the warm air of the cave, heavy with smoke of both tobacco and charcoal, with the odor of cooked rice and meat, saffron, pimentos, and oil, the tarry, wine-spilled smell of the big skin hung beside the door, hung by the neck and the four legs extended, wine drawn from a plug fitted in one leg, wine that spilled a little onto the earth of the floor, settling the dust smell; out now from the odors of different herbs whose names he did not know that hung in bunches from the ceiling, with long ropes of garlic, away now from the copper-penny, red wine and garlic, horse sweat and man sweat dried in the clothing (acrid and gray the man sweat, sweet and sickly the dried brushed-off lather of horse sweat), of the men at the table, Robert Jordan breathed deeply of the clear night air of the mountains that smelled of the pines and of the dew on the grass in the meadow by the stream. Dew had fallen heavily since the wind had dropped, but, as he stood there, he thought there would be frost by morning. As he stood breathing deep and then listening to the night, he heard first, firing far away, and then he heard an owl cry in the timber below, where the horse corral was slung. Then inside the cave he could hear the gypsy starting to sing and the soft chording of a guitar.

"I had an inheritance from my father," the artificially hardened voice rose harshly and hung there. Then went on:

"It was the moon and the sun

“And though I roam all over the world

“The spending of it’s never done. “

The guitar thudded with chorded applause for the singer. “Good,” Robert Jordan heard some one say. “Give us the Catalan, gypsy.”

“No.”

“Yes. Yes. The Catalan.”

“All right,” the gypsy said and sang mournfully,

“My nose is flat.

“My face is black.

“But still I am a man.”

“Ole!” some one said. “Go on, gypsy!”

The gypsy’s voice rose tragically and mockingly.

“Thank God I am a Negro.

“And not a Catalan!”

“There is much noise,” Pablo’s voice said. “Shut up, gypsy.”

“Yes,” he heard the woman’s voice. “There is too much noise. You could call the *guardia civil* with that voice and still it has no quality.”

“I know another verse,” the gypsy said and the guitar commenced.

“Save it,” the woman told him.

The guitar stopped.

“I am not good in voice tonight. So there is no loss,” the gypsy said and pushing the blanket aside he came out into the dark. Robert Jordan watched him walk over to a tree and then come toward him.

“Roberto,” the gypsy said softly.

“Yes, Rafael,” he said. He knew the gypsy had been affected by the wine from his voice. He himself had drunk the two absinthes and some wine but his head was clear and cold from the strain of the difficulty with Pablo.

“Why didst thou not kill Pablo?” the gypsy said very softly.

"Why kill him?"

"You have to kill him sooner or later. Why did you not approve of the moment?"

"Do you speak seriously?"

"What do you think they all waited for? What do you think the woman sent the girl away for? Do you believe that it is possible to continue after what has been said?"

"That you all should kill him."

"Qué va," the gypsy said quietly. "That is your business. Three or four times we waited for you to kill him. Pablo has no friends."

"I had the idea," Robert Jordan said. "But I left it.

"Surely all could see that. Everyone noted your preparations. Why didn't you do it?"

"I thought it might molest you others or the woman."

"Qué va. And the woman waiting as a whore waits for the flight of the big bird. Thou art younger than thou appearest."

"It is possible."

"Kill him now," the gypsy urged.

"That is to assassinate."

"Even better," the gypsy said very softly. "Less danger. Go on. Kill him now."

"I cannot in that way. It is repugnant to me and it is not how one should act for the cause."

"Provoke him then," the gypsy said. "But you have to kill him. There is no remedy."

As they spoke, the owl flew between the trees with the softness of all silence, dropping past them, then rising, the wings beating quickly, but with no noise of feathers moving as the bird hunted.

"Look at him," the gypsy said in the dark. "Thus should men move."

"And in the day, blind in a tree with crows around him," Robert Jordan said.

"Rarely," said the gypsy. "And then by hazard. Kill him," he

went on. “Do not let it become difficult.”

“Now the moment is passed.”

“Provoke it,” the gypsy said. “Or take advantage of the quiet.”

The blanket that closed the cave door opened and light came out. Some one came toward where they stood.

“It is a beautiful night,” the man said in a heavy, dull voice.

“We will have good weather.”

It was Pablo.

He was smoking one of the Russian cigarettes and in the glow, as he drew on the cigarette, his round face showed. They could see his heavy, long-armed body in the starlight.

“Do not pay any attention to the woman,” he said to Robert Jordan. In the dark the cigarette glowed bright, then showed in his hand as he lowered it. “She is difficult sometimes. She is a good woman. Very loyal to the Republic.” The light of the cigarette jerked slightly now as he spoke. He must be talking with it in the corner of his mouth, Robert Jordan thought. “We should have no difficulties. We are of accord. I am glad you have come.” The cigarette glowed brightly. “Pay no attention to arguments,” he said. “You are very welcome here.

“Excuse me now,” he said. “I go to see how they have picketed the horses.”

He went off through the trees to the edge of the meadow and they heard a horse nicker from below.

“You see?” the gypsy said. “Now you see? In this way has the moment escaped.”

Robert Jordan said nothing.

“I go down there,” the gypsy said angrily.

“To do what?”

“Qué va, to do what. At least to prevent him leaving.”

“Can he leave with a horse from below?”

“No.”

“Then go to the spot where you can prevent him.”

"Agustín is there."

"Go then and speak with Agustín. Tell him that which has happened."

"Agustín will kill him with pleasure."

"Less bad," Robert Jordan said. "Go then above and tell him all as it happened."

"And then?"

"I go to look below in the meadow."

"Good. Man. Good," he could not see Rafael's face in the dark but he could feel him smiling. "Now you have tightened your garters," the gypsy said approvingly.

"Go to Agustín," Robert Jordan said to him.

"Yes, Roberto, yes," said the gypsy.

Robert Jordan walked through the pines, feeling his way from tree to tree to the edge of the meadow. Looking across it in the darkness, lighter here in the open from the starlight, he saw the dark bulks of the picketed horses. He counted them where they were scattered between him and the stream. There were five. Robert Jordan sat down at the foot of a pine tree and looked out across the meadow.

I am tired, he thought, and perhaps my judgment is not good. But my obligation is the bridge and to fulfill that, I must take no useless risk of myself until I complete that duty. Of course it is sometimes more of a risk not to accept chances which are necessary to take but I have done this so far, trying to let the situation take its own course. If it is true, as the gypsy says, that they expected me to kill Pablo then I should have done that. But it was never clear to me that they did expect that. For a stranger to kill where he must work with the people afterwards is very bad. It may be done in action, and it may be done if backed by sufficient discipline, but in this case I think it would be very bad, although it was a temptation and seemed a short and simple way. But I do not believe anything is that short nor that simple in this country and, while I trust the

woman absolutely, I could not tell how she would react to such a drastic thing. One dying in such a place can be very ugly, dirty and repugnant. You could not tell how she would react. Without the woman there is no organization nor any discipline here and with the woman it can be very good. It would be ideal if she would kill him, or if the gypsy would (but he will not) or if the sentry, Agustín, would. Anselmo will if I ask it, though he says he is against all killing. He hates him, I believe, and he already trusts me and believes in me as a representative of what he believes in. Only he and the woman really believe in the Republic as far as I can see; but it is too early to know that yet.

As his eyes became used to the starlight he could see that Pablo was standing by one of the horses. The horse lifted his head from grazing; then dropped it impatiently. Pablo was standing by the horse, leaning against him, moving with him as he swung with the length of the picket rope and patting him on the neck. The horse was impatient at the tenderness while he was feeding. Robert Jordan could not see what Pablo was doing, nor hear what he was saying to the horse, but he could see that he was neither unpicketing nor saddling. He sat watching him, trying to think his problem out clearly.

"Thou my big good little pony," Pablo was saying to the horse in the dark; it was the big bay stallion he was speaking to. "Thou lovely white-faced big beauty. Thou with the big neck arching like the viaduct of my pueblo," he stopped. "But arching more and much finer." The horse was snatching grass, swinging his head sideways as he pulled, annoyed by the man and his talking. "Thou art no woman nor a fool," Pablo told the bay horse. "Thou, oh, thou, thee, thee, my big little pony. Thou art no woman like a rock that is burning. Thou art no colt of a girl with cropped head and the movement of a foal still wet from its mother. Thou dost not insult nor lie nor not understand. Thou, oh, thee, oh my good big little pony."

It would have been very interesting for Robert Jordan to have heard Pablo speaking to the bay horse but he did not hear him because now, convinced that Pablo was only down checking on his horses, and having decided that it was not a practical move to kill him at this time, he stood up and walked back to the cave. Pablo stayed in the meadow talking to the horse for a long time. The horse understood nothing that he said; only, from the tone of the voice, that they were endearments and he had been in the corral all day and was hungry now, grazing impatiently at the limits of his picket rope, and the man annoyed him. Pablo shifted the picket pin finally and stood by the horse, not talking now. The horse went on grazing and was relieved now

Chapter Six

Inside the cave, Robert Jordan sat on one of the rawhide stools in a corner by the fire listening to the woman. She was washing the dishes and the girl, Maria, was drying them and putting them away, kneeling to place them in the hollow dug in the wall that was used as a shelf.

"It is strange," she said. "That El Sordo has not come. He should have been here an hour ago."

"Did you advise him to come?"

"No. He comes each night."

"Perhaps he is doing something. Some work."

"It is possible," she said. "If he does not come we must go to see him tomorrow."

"Yes. Is it far from here?"

"No. It will be a good trip. I lack exercise."

"Can I go?" Maria asked. "May I go too, Pilar?"

"Yes, beautiful," the woman said, then turning her big face, "Isn't she pretty?" she asked Robert Jordan. "How does she seem to thee? A little thin?"

"To me she seems very well," Robert Jordan said. Maria filled his cup with wine. "Drink that," she said. "It will make me seem even better. It is necessary to drink much of that for me to seem beautiful."

"Then I had better stop," Robert Jordan said. "Already thou seemest beautiful and more."

"That's the way to talk," the woman said. "You talk like the good ones. What more does she seem?"

“Intelligent,” Robert Jordan said lamely. Maria giggled and the woman shook her head sadly. “How well you begin and how it ends, Don Roberto.”

“Don’t call me Don Roberto.”

“It is a joke. Here we say Don Pablo for a joke. As we say the Señorita Maria for a joke.”

“I don›t joke that way,” Robert Jordan said. “Carnarada to me is what all should be called with seriousness in this war. In the joking commences a rottenness.”

“Thou art very religious about thy politics,” the woman teased him. “Thou makest no jokes?”

“Yes. I care much for jokes but not in the form of address. It is like a flag.”

“I could make jokes about a flag. Any flag,” the woman laughed. “To me no one can joke of anything. The old flag of yellow and gold we called pus and blood. The flag of the Republic with the purple added we call blood, pus and permanganate. It is a joke.”

“He is a Communist,” Maria said. “They are very serious *gente.”*

“Are you a Communist?”

“No I am an anti-fascist.”

“For a long time?”

“Since I have understood fascism.”

“How long is that?”

“For nearly ten years.”

“That is not much time,” the woman said. “I have been a Republican for twenty years.”

“My father was a Republican all his life,” Maria said. “It was for that they shot him.”

“My father was also a Republican all his life. Also my grandfather,” Robert Jordan said.

“In what country?”

“The United States.”

“Did they shoot them?” the woman asked.

"Qué va," Maria said. "The United States is a country of Republicans. They don't shoot you for being a Republican there."

"All the same it is a good thing to have a grandfather who was a Republican," the woman said. "It shows a good blood."

"My grandfather was on the Republican national committee," Robert Jordan said. That impressed even Maria.

"And is thy father still active in the Republic?" Pilar asked.

"No. He is dead."

"Can one ask how he died?"

"He shot himself."

"To avoid being tortured?" the woman asked.

"Yes," Robert Jordan said. "To avoid being tortured."

Maria looked at him with tears in her eyes. "My father," she said, "could not obtain a weapon. Oh, I am very glad that your father had the good fortune to obtain a weapon."

"Yes. It was pretty lucky," Robert Jordan said. "Should we talk about something else?"

"Then you and me we are the same," Maria said. She put her hand on his arm and looked in his face. He looked at her brown face and at the eyes that, since he had seen them, had never been as young as the rest of her face but that now were suddenly hungry and young and wanting.

"You could be brother and sister by the look," the woman said. "But I believe it is fortunate that you are not."

"Now I know why I have felt as I have," Maria said. "Now it is clear."

"Qué va," Robert Jordan said and reaching over, he ran his hand over the top of her head. He had been wanting to do that all day and now he did it, he could feel his throat swelling. She moved her head under his hand and smiled up at him and he felt the thick but silky roughness of the cropped head rippling between his fingers. Then his hand was on her neck and then he dropped it.

"Do it again," she said. "I wanted you to do that all day."

“Later,” Robert Jordan said and his voice was thick.

“And me,” the woman of Pablo said in her booming voice. “I am expected to watch all this? I am expected not to be moved? One cannot. For fault of anything better; that Pablo should come back.”

Maria took no notice of her now, nor of the others playing cards at the table by the candlelight.

“Do you want another cup of wine, Roberto?” she asked.

“Yes,” he said. “Why not?”

“You’re going to have a drunkard like I have,” the woman of Pablo said. “With that rare thing he drank in the cup and all. Listen to me, *Inglés.* “

“Not *Inglés.* American.”

“Listen, then, American. Where do you plan to sleep?”

“Outside. I have a sleeping robe.”

“Good,” she said. “The night is clear?”

“And will be cold.”

“Outside then,” she said. “Sleep thee outside. And thy materials can sleep with me.”

“Good,” said Robert Jordan.

“Leave us for a moment,” Robert Jordan said to the girl and put his hand on her shoulder.

“Why?”

“I wish to speak to Pilar.”

“Must I go?”

“Yes.”

“What is it?” the woman of Pablo said when the girl had gone over to the mouth of the cave where she stood by the big wineskin, watching the card players.

“The gypsy said I should have—” he began.

“No,” the woman interrupted. “He is mistaken.”

“If it is necessary that I—” Robert Jordan said quietly but with difficulty.

“Thee would have done it, I believe,” the woman said. “Nay, it is

not necessary. I was watching thee. But thy judgment was good."

"But if it is needful—"

"No," the woman said. "I tell you it is not needful. The mind of the gypsy is corrupt."

"But in weakness a man can be a great danger."

"No. Thou dost not understand. Out of this one has passed all capacity for danger."

"I do not understand."

"Thou art very young still," she said. "You will understand." Then, to the girl, "Come, Maria. We are not talking more."

The girl came over and Robert Jordan reached his hand out and patted her head. She stroked under his hand like a kitten. Then he thought that she was going to cry. But her lips drew up again and she looked at him and smiled.

"Thee would do well to go to bed now," the woman said to Robert Jordan. "Thou hast had a long journey."

"Good," said Robert Jordan. "I will get my things."

Chapter Seven

He was asleep in the robe and he had been asleep, he thought, for a long time. The robe was spread on the forest floor in the lee of the rocks beyond the cave mouth and as he slept, he turned, and turning rolled on his pistol which was fastened by a lanyard to one wrist and had been by his side under the cover when he went to sleep, shoulder and back weary, leg-tired, his muscles pulled with tiredness so that the ground was soft, and simply stretching in the robe against the flannel lining was voluptuous with fatigue. Waking, he wondered where he was, knew, and then shifted the pistol from under his side and settled happily to stretch back into sleep, his hand on the pillow of his clothing that was bundled neatly around his rope-soled shoes. He had one arm around the pillow.

Then he felt her hand on his shoulder and turned quickly, his right hand holding the pistol under the robe.

"Oh, it is thee," he said and dropping the pistol he reached both arms up and pulled her down. With his arms around her he could feel her shivering.

"Get in," he said softly. "It is cold out there."

"No. I must not."

"Get in," he said. "And we can talk about it later."

She was trembling and he held her wrist now with one hand and held her lightly with the other arm. She had turned her head away.

"Get in, little rabbit," he said and kissed her on the back of the neck.

"I am afraid."

“No. Do not be afraid. Get in.”

“How?”

“Just slip in. There is much room. Do you want me to help you?”

“No,” she said and then she was in the robe and he was holding her tight to him and trying to kiss her lips and she was pressing her face against the pillow of clothing but holding her arms close around his neck. Then he felt her arms relax and she was shivering again as he held her.

“No,” he said and laughed. “Do not be afraid. That is the pistol.”

He lifted it and slipped it behind him.

“I am ashamed,” she said, her face away from him.

“No. You must not be. Here. Now.”

“No, I must not. I am ashamed and frightened.”

“No. My rabbit. Please.”

“I must not. If thou dost not love me.”

“I love thee.”

“I love thee. Oh, I love thee. Put thy hand on my head,” she said away from him, her face still in the pillow. He put his hand on her head and stroked it and then suddenly her face was away from the pillow and she was in his arms, pressed close against him, and her face was against his and she was crying.

He held her still and close, feeling the long length of the young body, and he stroked her head and kissed the wet saltiness of her eyes, and as she cried he could feel the rounded, firm-pointed breasts touching through the shirt she wore.

“I cannot kiss,” she said. “I do not know how.”

“There is no need to kiss.”

“Yes. I must kiss. I must do everything.”

“There is no need to do anything. We are all right. But thou hast many clothes.”

“What should I do?”

“I will help you.”

“Is that better?”

“Yes. Much. It is not better to thee?”

“Yes. Much better. And I can go with thee as Pilar said?”

“Yes.”

“But not to a home. With thee.”

“No, to a home.”

“No. No. No. With thee and I will be thy woman.”

Now as they lay all that before had been shielded was unshielded. Where there had been roughness of fabric all was smooth with a smoothness and firm rounded pressing and a long warm coolness, cool outside and warm within, long and light and closely holding, closely held, lonely, hollow-making with contours, happy-making, young and loving and now all warmly smooth with a hollowing, chest-aching, tight-held loneliness that was such that Robert Jordan felt he could not stand it and he said, “Hast thou loved others?”

“Never.”

Then suddenly, going dead in his arms, “But things were done to me.”

“By whom?”

“By various.”

Now she lay perfectly quietly and as though her body were dead and turned her head away from him.

“Now you will not love me.”

“I love you,” he said.

But something had happened to him and she knew it.

“No,” she said and her voice had gone dead and flat. “Thou wilt not love me. But perhaps thou wilt take me to the home. And I will go to the home and I will never be thy woman nor anything.”

“I love thee, Maria.”

“No. It is not true,” she said. Then as a last thing pitifully and hopefully.

“But I have never kissed any man.”

“Then kiss me now.”

“I wanted to,” she said. “But I know not how. Where things were done to me I fought until I could not see. I fought until—until—until one sat upon my head—and I bit him—and then they tied my mouth and held my arms behind my head—and others did things to me.”

“I love thee, Maria,” he said. “And no one has done anything to thee. Thee, they cannot touch. No one has touched thee, little rabbit.”

“You believe that?”

“I know it.”

“And you can love me?” warm again against him now.

“I can love thee more.”

“I will try to kiss thee very well.”

“Kiss me a little.”

“I do not know how.”

“Just kiss me.”

She kissed him on the cheek.

“No.”

“Where do the noses go? I always wondered where the noses would go.”

“Look, turn thy head,” and then their mouths were tight together and she lay close pressed against him and her mouth opened a little gradually and then, suddenly, holding her against him, he was happier than he had ever been, lightly, lovingly, exultingly, innerly happy and unthinking and untired and unworried and only feeling a great delight and he said, “My little rabbit. My darling. My sweet. My long lovely.”

“What do you say?” she said as though from a great distance away.

“My lovely one,” he said.

They lay there and he felt her heart beating against his and with the side of his foot he stroked very lightly against the side of hers.

“Thee came barefooted,” he said.

“Yes.”

“Then thee knew thou wert coming to the bed.”

“Yes.”

“And you had no fear.”

“Yes. Much. But more fear of how it would be to take my shoes off.”

“And what time is it now? *to sabes?”*

“No. Thou hast no watch?”

“Yes. But it is behind thy back.”

“Take it from there.”

“No.”

“Then look over my shoulder.”

It was one o’clock. The dial showed bright in the darkness that the robe made.

“Thy chin scratches my shoulder.”

“Pardon it. I have no tools to shave.”

“I like it. Is thy beard blond?”

“Yes.”

“And will it be long?”

“Not before the bridge. Maria, listen. Dost thou—?”

“Do I what?”

“Dost thou wish?”

“Yes. Everything. Please. And if we do everything together, the other maybe never will have been.”

“Did you think of that?”

“No. I think it in myself but Pilar told me.”

“She is very wise.”

“And another thing,” Maria said softly. “She said for me to tell you that I am not sick. She knows about such things and she said to tell you that.”

“She told you to tell me?”

“Yes. I spoke to her and told her that I love you. I loved you

when I saw you today and I loved you always but I never saw you before and I told Pilar and she said if I ever told you anything about anything, to tell you that I was not sick. The other thing she told me long ago. Soon after the train."

"What did she say?"

"She said that nothing is done to oneself that one does not accept and that if I loved some one it would take it all away. I wished to die, you see."

"What she said is true."

"And now I am happy that I did not die. I am so happy that I did not die. And you can love me?"

"Yes. I love you now."

"And I can be thy woman?"

"I cannot have a woman doing what I do. But thou art my woman now."

"If once I am, then I will keep on. Am I thy woman now?"

"Yes, Maria. Yes, my little rabbit."

She held herself tight to him and her lips looked for his and then found them and were against them and he felt her, fresh, new and smooth and young and lovely with the warm, scalding coolness and unbelievable to be there in the robe that was as familiar as his clothes, or his shoes, or his duty and then she said, frightenedly, "And now let us do quickly what it is we do so that the other is all gone."

"You want?"

"Yes," she said almost fiercely. "Yes. Yes. Yes."

Chapter Eight

It was cold in the night and Robert Jordan slept heavily. Once he woke and, stretching, realized that the girl was there, curled far down in the robe, breathing lightly and regularly, and in the dark, bringing his head in from the cold, the sky hard and sharp with stars, the air cold in his nostrils, he put his head under the warmth of the robe and kissed her smooth shoulder. She did not wake and he rolled onto his side away from her and with his head out of the robe in the cold again, lay awake a moment feeling the long, seeping luxury of his fatigue and then the smooth tactile happiness of their two bodies touching and then, as he pushed his legs out deep as they would go in the robe, he slipped down steeply into sleep.

He woke at first daylight and the girl was gone. He knew it as he woke and, putting out his arm, he felt the robe warm where she had been. He looked at the mouth of the cave where the blanket showed frost-rimmed and saw the thin gray smoke from the crack in the rocks that meant the kitchen fire was lighted.

A man came out of the timber, a blanket worn over his head like a poncho. Robert Jordan saw it was Pablo and that he was smoking a cigarette. He's been down corralling the horses, he thought.

Pablo pulled open the blanket and went into the cave without looking toward Robert Jordan.

Robert Jordan felt with his hand the light frost that lay on the worn, spotted green balloon silk outer covering of the five-year-old down robe, then settled into it again. *Bueno,* he said to himself, feeling the familiar caress of the flannel lining as he spread his legs

wide, then drew them together and then turned on his side so that his head would be away from the direction where he knew the sun would come. *Qué más da,* I might as well sleep some more.

He slept until the sound of airplane motors woke him.

Lying on his back, he saw them, a fascist patrol of three Fiats, tiny, bright, fast-moving across the mountain sky, headed in the direction from which Anselmo and he had come yesterday. The three passed and then came nine more, flying much higher in the minute, pointed formations of threes, threes and threes.

Pablo and the gypsy were standing at the cave mouth, in the shadow, watching the sky and as Robert Jordan lay still, the sky now full of the high hammering roar of motors, there was a new droning roar and three more planes came over at less than a thousand feet above the clearing. These three were Heinkel oneelevens, twin-motor bombers.

Robert Jordan, his head in the shadow of the rocks, knew they would not see him, and that it did not matter if they did. He knew they could possibly see the horses in the corral if they were looking for anything in these mountains. If they were not looking for anything they might still see them but would naturally take them for some of their own cavalry mounts. Then came a new and louder droning roar and three more Heinkel one-elevens showed coming steeply, stiffly, lower yet, crossing in rigid formation, their pounding roar approaching in crescendo to an absolute of noise and then receding as they passed the clearing.

Robert Jordan unrolled the bundle of clothing that made his pillow and pulled on his shirt. It was over his head and he was pulling it down when he heard the next planes coming and he pulled his trousers on under the robe and lay still as three more of the Heinkel bimotor bombers came over. Before they were gone over the shoulder of the mountain, he had buckled on his pistol, rolled the robe and placed it against the rocks and sat now, close against the rocks, tying his rope-soled shoes when the approaching

droning turned to a greater clattering roar than ever before and nine more Heinkel light bombers came in echelons; hammering the sky apart as they went over.

Robert Jordan slipped along the rocks to the mouth of the cave where one of the brothers, Pablo, the gypsy, Anselmo, Agustín and the woman stood in the mouth looking out.

"Have there been planes like this before?" he asked.

"Never," said Pablo. "Get in. They will see thee."

The sun had not yet hit the mouth of the cave. It was just now shining on the meadow by the stream and Robert Jordan knew they could not be seen in the dark, early morning shadow of the trees and the solid shade the rocks made, but he went in the cave in order not to make them nervous.

"They are many," the woman said.

"And there will be more," Robert Jordan said.

"How do you know?" Pablo asked suspiciously.

"Those, just now, will have pursuit planes with them."

Just then they heard them, the higher, whining drone, and as they passed at about five thousand feet, Robert Jordan counted fifteen Fiats in echelon of echelons like a wild-goose flight of the V-shaped threes.

In the cave entrance their faces all looked very sober and Robert Jordan said, "You have not seen this many planes?"

"Never," said Pablo.

"There are not many at Segovia?"

"Never has there been, we have seen three usually. Sometimes six of the chasers. Perhaps three Junkers, the big ones with the three motors, with the chasers with them. Never have we seen planes like this."

It is bad, Robert Jordan thought. This is really bad. Here is a concentration of planes which means something very bad. I must listen for them to unload. But no, they cannot have brought up the troops yet for the attack. Certainly not before tonight or tomorrow

night, certainly not yet. Certainly they will not be moving anything at this hour.

He could still hear the receding drone. He looked at his watch. By now they should be over the lines, the first ones anyway. He pushed the knob that set the second hand to clicking and watched it move around. No, perhaps not yet. By now. Yes. Well over by now. Two hundred and fifty miles an hour for those one-elevens anyway. Five minutes would carry them there. By now they're well beyond the pass with Castile all yellow and tawny beneath them now in the morning, the yellow crossed by white roads and spotted with the small villages and the shadows of the Heinkels moving over the land as the shadows of sharks pass over a sandy floor of the ocean.

There was no bump, bump, bumping thud of bombs. His watch ticked on.

They're going on to Colmenar, to Escorial, or to the flying field at Manzanares el Real, he thought, with the old castle above the lake with the ducks in the reeds and the fake airfield just behind the real field with the dummy planes, not quite hidden, their props turning in the wind. That's where they must be headed. They can't know about the attack, he told himself and something in him said, why can't they? They've known about all the others.

"Do you think they saw the horses?" Pablo asked.

"Those weren't looking for horses," Robert Jordan said.

"But did they see them?"

"Not unless they were asked to look for them."

"Could they see them?"

"Probably not," Robert Jordan said. "Unless the sun were on the trees."

"It is on them very early," Pablo said miserably.

"I think they have other things to think of besides thy horses," Robert Jordan said.

It was eight minutes since he had pushed the lever on the stop watch and there was still no sound of bombing.

“What do you do with the watch?” the woman asked.

“I listen where they have gone.”

“Oh,” she said. At ten minutes he stopped looking at the watch knowing it would be too far away to hear, now, even allowing a minute for the sound to travel, and said to Anselmo, “I would speak to thee.”

Anselmo came out of the cave mouth and they walked a little way from the entrance and stood beside a pine tree.

“Qué tal?” Robert Jordan asked him. “How goes it?”

“All right.”

“Hast thou eaten?”

“No. No one has eaten.”

“Eat then and take something to eat at mid-day. I want you to go to watch the road. Make a note of everything that passes both up and down the road.

“I do not write.”

“There is no need to,” Robert Jordan took out two leaves from his notebook and with his knife cut an inch from the end of his pencil. “Take this and make a mark for tanks thus,” he drew a slanted tank, “and then a mark for each one and when there are four, cross the four strokes for the fifth.”

“In this way we count also.”

“Good. Make another mark, two wheels and a box, for trucks. If they are empty make a circle. If they are full of troops make a straight mark. Mark for guns. Big ones, thus. Small ones, thus. Mark for cars. Mark for ambulances. Thus, two wheels and a box with a cross on it. Mark for troops on foot by companies, like this, see? A little square and then mark beside it. Mark for cavalry, like this, you see? Like a horse. A box with four legs. That is a troop of twenty horse. You understand? Each troop a mark.”

“Yes. It is ingenious.”

“Now,” he drew two large wheels with circles around them and a short line for a gun barrel. “These are anti-tanks. They have

rubber tires. Mark for them. These are anti-aircraft," two wheels with the gun barrel slanted up. "Mark for them also. Do you understand? Have you seen such guns?"

"Yes," Anselmo said. "Of course. It is clear."

"Take the gypsy with you that he will know from what point you will be watching so you may be relieved. Pick a place that is safe, not too close and from where you can see well and comfortably. Stay until you are relieved."

"I understand."

"Good. And that when you come back, I should know everything that moved upon the road. One paper is for movement up. One is for movement down the road."

They walked over toward the cave.

"Send Rafael to me," Robert Jordan said and waited by the tree. He watched Anselmo go into the cave, the blanket falling behind him. The gypsy sauntered out, wiping his mouth with his hand.

"Qué tal?" the gypsy said. "Did you divert yourself last night?"

"I slept."

"Less bad," the gypsy said and grinned. "Have you a cigarette?"

"Listen," Robert Jordan said and felt in his pocket for the cigarettes. "I wish you to go with Anselmo to a place from which he will observe the road. There you will leave him, noting the place in order that you may guide me to it or guide whoever will relieve him later. You will then go to where you can observe the saw mill and note if there are any changes in the post there."

"What changes?"

"How many men are there now?"

"Eight. The last I knew."

"See how many are there now. See at what intervals the guard is relieved at that bridge."

"Intervals?"

"How many hours the guard stays on. and at what time a change is made."

"I have no watch."

"Take mine." He unstrapped it.

"What a watch," Rafael said admiringly. "Look at what complications. Such a watch should be able to read and write. Look at what complications of numbers. It's a watch to end watches."

"Don't fool with it," Robert Jordan said. "Can you tell time?"

"Why not? Twelve o'clock mid-day. Hunger. Twelve o'clock midnight. Sleep. Six o'clock in the morning, hunger. Six o'clock at night, drunk. With luck. Ten o'clock at night—"

"Shut up," Robert Jordan said. "You don't need to be a clown. I want you to check on the guard at the big bridge and the post on the road below in the same manner as the post and the guard at the saw mill and the small bridge."

"It is much work," the gypsy smiled. "You are sure there is no one you would rather send than me?"

"No, Rafael. It is very important. That you should do it very carefully and keeping out of sight with care."

"I believe I will keep out of sight," the gypsy said. "Why do you tell me to keep out of sight? You think I want to be shot?"

"Take things a little seriously," Robert Jordan said. "This is serious."

"Thou askest me to take things seriously? After what thou didst last night? When thou needest to kill a man and instead did what you did? You were supposed to kill one, not make one! When we have just seen the sky full of airplanes of a quantity to kill us back to our grandfathers and forward to all unborn grandsons including all cats, goats and bedbugs. Airplanes making a noise to curdle the milk in your mother's breasts as they pass over darkening the sky and roaring like lions and you ask me to take things seriously. I take them too seriously already."

"All right," said Robert Jordan and laughed and put his hand on the gypsy's shoulder. *"Don't* take them too seriously then. Now finish your breakfast and go."

“And thou?” the gypsy asked. “What do you do?”

“I go to see El Sordo.”

“After those airplanes it is very possible that thou wilt find nobody in the whole mountains,” the gypsy said. “There must have been many people sweating the big drop this morning when those passed.”

“Those have other work than hunting guerillas.”

“Yes,” the gypsy said. Then shook his head. “But when they care to undertake that work.”

“Qué va,” Robert Jordan said. “Those are the best of the German light bombers. They do not send those after gypsies.”

“They give me a horror,” Rafael said. “Of such things, yes, I am frightened.”

“They go to bomb an airfield,” Robert Jordan told him as they went into the cave. “I am almost sure they go for that.”

“What do you say?” the woman of Pablo asked. She poured him a bowl of coffee and handed him a can of condensed milk.

“There is milk? What luxury!”

“There is everything,” she said. “And since the planes there is much fear. Where did you say they went?”

Robert Jordan dripped some of the thick milk into his coffee from the slit cut in the can, wiped the can on the rim of the cup, and stirred the coffee until it was light brown.

“They go to bomb an airfield I believe. They might go to Escorial and Colmenar. Perhaps all three.”

“That they should go a long way and keep away from here,” Pablo said.

“And why are they here now?” the woman asked. “What brings them now? Never have we seen such planes. Nor in such quantity. Do they prepare an attack?”

“What movement was there on the road last night?” Robert Jordan asked. The girl Maria was close to him but he did not look at her.

"You," the woman said. "Fernando. You were in La Granja last night. What movement was there?"

"Nothing," a short, open-faced man of about thirty-five with a cast in one eye, whom Robert Jordan had not seen before, answered. "A few camions as usual. Some cars. No movement of troops while I was there."

"You go into La Granja every night?" Robert Jordan asked him.

"I or another," Fernando said. "Some one goes."

"They go for the news. For tobacco. For small things," the woman said.

"We have people there?"

"Yes. Why not? Those who work the power plant. Some others."

"What was the news?"

"Pues nada. There was nothing. It still goes badly in the north. That is not news. In the north it has gone badly now since the beginning."

"Did you hear anything from Segovia?"

"No, *hombre.* I did not ask."

"Do you go into Segovia?"

"Sometimes," Fernando said. "But there is danger. There are controls where they ask for your papers."

"Do you know the airfield?"

"No, *hombre.* I know where it is but I was never close to it. There, there is much asking for papers."

"No one spoke about these planes last night?"

"In La Granja? Nobody. But they will talk about them tonight certainly. They talked about the broadcast of Quiepo de Llano. Nothing more. Oh, yes. It seems that the Republic is preparing an offensive."

"That what?"

"That the Republic is preparing an offensive."

"Where?"

"It is not certain. Perhaps here. Perhaps for another part of the

Sierra. Hast thou heard of it?"

"They say this in La Granja?"

"Yes, *hombre.* I had forgotten it. But there is always much talk of offensives."

"Where does this talk come from?"

"Where? Why from different people. The officers speak in the cafés in Segovia and Avila and the waiters note it. The rumors come running. Since some time they speak of an offensive by the Republic in these parts."

"By the Republic or by the Fascists?"

"By the Republic. If it were by the Fascists all would know of it. No, this is an offensive of quite some size. Some say there are two. One here and the other over the Alto del León near the Escorial. Have you heard aught of this?"

"What else did you hear?"

"Nada, hombre. Nothing. Oh, yes. There was some talk that the Republicans would try to blow up the bridges, if there was to be an offensive. But the bridges are guarded."

"Art thou joking?" Robert Jordan said, sipping his coffee.

"No, *hombre,"* said Fernando.

"This one doesn't joke," the woman said. "Bad luck that he doesn't."

"Then," said Robert Jordan. "Thank you for all the news. Did you hear nothing more?"

"No. They talk, as always, of troops to be sent to clear out these mountains. There is some talk that they are on the way. That they have been sent already from Valladolid. But they always talk in that way. It is not to give any importance to."

"And thou," the woman of Pablo said to Pablo almost viciously. "With thy talk of safety."

Pablo looked at her reflectively and scratched his chin. "Thou," he said. "And thy bridges."

"What bridges?" asked Fernando cheerfully.

“Stupid,” the woman said to him. “Thick head. *Tonto.* Take another cup of coffee and try to remember more news.”

“Don’t be angry, Pilar,” Fernando said calmly and cheerfully. “Neither should one become alarmed at rumors. I have told thee and this comrade all that I remember.”

“You don’t remember anything more?” Robert Jordan asked.

“No,” Fernando said with dignity. “And I am fortunate to remember this because, since it was but rumors, I paid no attention to any of it.”

“Then there may have been more?”

“Yes. It is possible. But I paid no attention. For a year I have heard nothing but rumors.”

Robert Jordan heard a quick, control-breaking sniff of laughter from the girl, Maria, who was standing behind him.

“Tell us one more rumor, Fernandito,” she said and then her shoulders shook again.

“If I could remember, I would not,” Fernando said. “It is beneath a man’s dignity to listen and give importance to rumors.”

“And with this we will save the Republic,” the woman said.

“No. *You* will save it by blowing bridges,” Pablo told her.

“Go,” said Robert Jordan to Anselmo and Rafael. “If you have eaten.”

“We go now,” the old man said and the two of them stood up. Robert Jordan felt a hand on his shoulder. It was Maria. “Thou shouldst eat,” she said and let her hand rest there. “Eat well so that thy stomach can support more rumors.”

“The rumors have taken the place of the appetite.”

“No. It should not be so. Eat this now before more rumors come.” She put the bowl before him.

“Do not make a joke of me,” Fernando said to her. “I am thy good friend, Maria.”

“I do not joke at thee, Fernando. I only joke with him and he should eat or he will be hungry.”

“We should all eat,” Fernando said. “Pilar, what passes that we are not served?”

“Nothing, man,” the woman of Pablo said and filled his bowl with the meat stew. “Eat. Yes, that’s what you *can* do. Eat now.”

“It is very good, Pilar,” Fernando said, all dignity intact.

“Thank you,” said the woman. “Thank you and thank you again.”

“Are you angry at me?” Fernando asked.

“No. Eat. Go ahead and eat.”

“I will,” said Fernando. “Thank you.”

Robert Jordan looked at Maria and her shoulders started shaking again and she looked away. Fernando ate steadily, a proud and dignified expression on his face, the dignity of which could not be affected even by the huge spoon that he was using or the slight dripping of juice from the stew which ran from the corners of his mouth.

“Do you like the food?” the woman of Pablo asked him.

“Yes, Pilar,” he said with his mouth full. “It is the same as usual.”

Robert Jordan felt Maria’s hand on his arm and felt her fingers tighten with delight.

“It is for *that* that you like it?” the woman asked Fernando.

“Yes,” she said. “I see. The stew; as usual. *Como siempre.* Things are bad in the north; as usual. An offensive here; as usual. That troops come to hunt us out; as usual. You could serve as a monument to as usual.”

“But the last two are only rumors, Pilar.”

“Spain,” the woman of Pablo said bitterly. Then turned to Robert Jordan. “Do they have people such as this in other countries?”

“There are no other countries like Spain,” Robert Jordan said politely.

“You are right,” Fernando said. “There is no other country in the

world like Spain."

"Hast thou ever seen any other country?" the woman asked him.

"Nay," said Fernando. "Nor do I wish to."

"You see?" the woman of Pablo said to Robert Jordan.

"Fernandito," Maria said to him. "Tell us of the time thee went to Valencia."

"I did not like Valencia."

"Why?" Maria asked and pressed Robert Jordan's arm agam. "Why did thee not like it?"

"The people had no manners and I could not understand them. All they did was shout *che* at one another."

"Could they understand thee?" Maria asked.

"They pretended not to," Fernando said.

"And what did thee there?"

"I left without even seeing the sea," Fernando said. "I did not like the people."

"Oh, get out of here, you old maid," the woman of Pablo said.

"Get out of here before you make me sick. In Valencia I had the best time of my life. *Vamos!* Valencia. Don't talk to me of Valencia."

"What did thee there?" Maria asked. The woman of Pablo sat down at the table with a bowl of coffee, a piece of bread and a bowl of the stew.

"Qué? what did we there. I was there when Finito had a contract for three fights at the Feria. Never have I seen so many people. Never have I seen cafes so crowded. For hours it would be impossible to get a seat and it was impossible to board the tram cars. In Valencia there was movement all day and all night."

"But what did you do?" Maria asked.

"All things," the woman said. "We went to the beach and lay in the water and boats with sails were hauled up out of the sea by oxen. The oxen driven to the water until they must swim; then harnessed to the boats, and, when they found their feet, staggering up the sand. Ten yokes of oxen dragging a boat with sails out of the

sea in the morning with the line of the small waves breaking on the beach. That is Valencia."

"But what did thee besides watch oxen?"

"We ate in pavilions on the sand. Pastries made of cooked and shredded fish and red and green peppers and small nuts like grains of rice. Pastries delicate and flaky and the fish of a richness that was incredible. Prawns fresh from the sea sprinkled with lime juice. They were pink and sweet and there were four bites to a prawn. Of those we ate many. Then we ate *paella* with fresh sea food, clams in their shells, mussels, crayfish, and small eels. Then we ate even smaller eels alone cooked in oil and as tiny as bean sprouts and curled in all directions and so tender they disappeared in the mouth without chewing. All the time drinking a white wine, cold, light and good at thirty centimos the bottle. And for an end, melon. That is the home of the melon."

"The melon of Castile is better," Fernando said.

"Qué va," said the woman of Pablo. "The melon of Castile is for self abuse. The melon of Valencia for eating. When I think of those melons long as one's arm, green like the sea and crisp and juicy to cut and sweeter than the early morning in summer. Aye, when I think of those smallest eels, tiny, delicate and in mounds on the plate. Also the beer in pitchers all through the afternoon, the beer sweating in its coldness in pitchers the size of water jugs."

"And what did thee when not eating nor drinking?"

"We made love in the room with the strip wood blinds hanging over the balcony and a breeze through the opening of the top of the door which turned on hinges. We made love there, the room dark in the day time from the hanging blinds, and from the streets there was the scent of the flower market and the smell of burned powder from the firecrackers of the *traca* that ran though the streets exploding each noon during the Feria. It was a line of fireworks that ran through all the city, the firecrackers linked together and the explosions running along on poles and wires of the tramways,

exploding with great noise and a jumping from pole to pole with a sharpness and a cracking of explosion you could not believe.

"We made love and then sent for another pitcher of beer with the drops of its coldness on the glass and when the girl brought it, I took it from the door and I placed the coldness of the pitcher against the back of Finito as he lay, now, asleep, not having wakened when the beer was brought, and he said, 'No, Pilar. No, woman, let me sleep.' And I said, 'No, wake up and drink this to see how cold,' and he drank without opening his eyes and went to sleep again and I lay with my back against a pillow at the foot of the bed and watched him sleep, brown and dark-haired and young and quiet in his sleep, and drank the whole pitcher, listening now to the music of a band that was passing. You," she said to Pablo. "Do you know aught of such things?"

"We have done things together," Pablo said.

"Yes," the woman said. "Why not? And thou wert more man than Finito in your time. But never did we go to Valencia. Never did we lie in bed together and hear a band pass in Valencia."

"It was impossible," Pablo told her. "We have had no opportunity to go to Valencia. Thou knowest that if thou wilt be reasonable. But, with Finito, neither did thee blow up any train."

"No," said the woman. "That is what is left to us. The train. Yes. Always the train. No one can speak against that. That remains of all the laziness, sloth and failure. That remains of the cowardice of this moment. There were many other things before too. I do not want to be unjust. But no one can speak against Valencia either. You hear mer"

"I did not like it," Fernando said quietly. "I did not like Valencia."

"Yet they speak of the mule as stubborn," the woman said. "Clean up, Maria, that we may go."

As she said this they heard the first sound of the planes returning.

Chapter Nine

They stood in the mouth of the cave and watched them. The bombers were high now in fast, ugly arrow-heads beating the sky apart with the noise of their motors. They *are* shaped like sharks, Robert Jordan thought, the wide-finned, sharp-nosed sharks of the Gulf Stream. But these, wide-finned in silver, roaring, the light mist of their propellers in the sun, these do not move like sharks. They move like no thing there has ever been. They move like mechanized doom.

You ought to write, he told himself. Maybe you will again some time. He felt Maria holding to his arm. She was looking up and he said to her, "What do they look like to you, *guapa?"*

"I don't know," she said. "Death, I think."

"They look like planes to me," the woman of Pablo said. "Where are the little ones?"

"They may be crossing at another part," Robert Jordan said. "Those bombers are too fast to have to wait for them and have come back alone. We never follow them across the lines to fight. There aren't enough planes to risk it."

Just then three Heinkel fighters in V formation came low over the clearing coming toward them, just over the tree tops, like clattering, wing-tilting, pinch-nosed ugly toys, to enlarge suddenly, fearfully to their actual size; pouring past in a whining roar. They were so low that from the cave mouth all of them could see the pilots, helmeted, goggled, a scarf blowing back from behind the patrol leader's head.

"Those can see the horses," Pablo said.

“Those can see thy cigarette butts,” the woman said. “Let fall the blanket.”

No more planes came over. The others must have crossed farther up the range and when the droning was gone they went out of the cave into the open.

The sky was empty now and high and blue and clear.

“It seems as though they were a dream that you wake from,” Maria said to Robert Jordan. There was not even the last almost unheard hum that comes like a finger faintly touching and leaving and touching again after the sound is gone almost past hearing.

“They are no dream and you go in and clean up,” Pilar said to her. “What about it?” she turned to Robert Jordan. “Should we ride or walk?”

Pablo looked at her and grunted.

“As you will,” Robert Jordan said.

“Then let us walk,” she said. “I would like it for the liver.”

“Riding is good for the liver.”

“Yes, but hard on the buttocks. We will walk and thou-” She turned to Pablo. “Go down and count thy beasts and see they have not flown away with any.”

“Do you want a horse to ride?” Pablo asked Robert Jordan.

“No. Many thanks. What about the girl?”

“Better for her to walk,” Pilar said. “She’ll get stiff in too many places and serve for nothing.”

Robert Jordan felt his face reddening.

“Did you sleep well?” Pilar asked. Then said, “It is true that there is no sickness. There could have been. I know not why there wasn’t. There probably still is God after all, although we have abolished Him. Go on,” she said to Pablo. “This does not concern thee. This is of people younger than thee. Made of other material. Get on.” Then to Robert Jordan, “Agustín is looking after thy things. We go when he comes.”

It was a clear, bright day and warm now in the sun. Robert

Jordan looked at the big, brown-faced woman with her kind, widely set eyes and her square, heavy face, lined and pleasantly ugly, the eyes merry, but the face sad until the lips moved. He looked at her and then at the man, heavy and stolid, moving off through the trees toward the corral. The woman, too, was looking after him.

"Did you make love?" the woman said.

"What did she say?"

"She would not tell me."

"I neither."

"Then you made love," the woman said. "Be as careful with her as you can."

"What if she has a baby?"

"That will do no harm," the woman said. "That will do less harm."

"This is no place for that."

"She will not stay here. She will go with you."

"And where will I go? I can't take a woman where I go."

"Who knows? You may take two where you go."

"That is no way to talk."

"Listen," the woman said. "I am no coward, but I see things very clearly in the early morning and I think there are many that we know that are alive now who will never see another Sunday."

"In what day are we?"

"Sunday."

"Qué va," said Robert Jordan. "Another Sunday is very far. If we see Wednesday we are all right. But I do not like to hear thee talk like this."

"Everyone needs to talk to some one," the woman said. "Before we had religion and other nonsense. Now for everyone there should be some one to whom one can speak frankly, for all the valor that one could have one becomes very alone."

"We are not alone. We are all together."

"The sight of those machines does things to one," the woman

said. “We are nothing against such machines.”

“Yet we can beat them.”

“Look,” the woman said. “I confess a sadness to you, but do not think I lack resolution. Nothing has happened to my resolution.”

“The sadness will dissipate as the sun rises. It is like a mist.”

“Clearly,” the woman said. “If you want it that way. Perhaps it came from talking that foolishness about Valencia. And that failure of a man who has gone to look at his horses. I wounded him much with the story. Kill him, yes. Curse him, yes. But wound him, no.”

“How came you to be with him?”

“How is one with anyone? In the first days of the movement and before too, he was something. Something serious. But now he is finished. The plug has been drawn and the wine has all run out of the skin.”

“I do not like him.”

“Nor does he like you, and with reason. Last night I slept with him.” She smiled now and shook her head. *“Vamos a ver,”* she said. “I said to him, ‘Pablo, why did you not kill the foreigner?’

“’He’s a good boy, Pilar,’ he said. ‘He’s a good boy.’

“So I said, ‘You understand now that I command?’

“’Yes, Pilar. Yes,’ he said. Later in the night I hear him awake and he is crying. He is crying in a short and ugly manner as a man cries when it is as though there is an animal inside that is shaking him.

“’What passes with thee, Pablo?’ I said to him and I took hold of him and held him.

“’Nothing, Pilar. Nothing.’

“’Yes. Something passes with thee.’

“’The people,’ he said. ‘The way they left me. The *gente.’*

“’Yes, but they are with me,’ I said, ‘and I am thy woman.’

“’Pilar,’ he said, ‘remember the train.’ Then he said, ‘May God aid thee, Pilar.’

“’What are you talking of God for?’ I said to him. ‘What way is

that to speak?'

"'Yes,' he said. 'God and the *Virgen.'*

'"Qué va, God and the *Virgen:* 1 said to him. 'Is that any way to talk?'

"'I am afraid to die, Pilar,' he said. *'Tengo miedo de morir.* Dost thou understand?'

"'Then get out of bed,' I said to him. 'There is not room in one bed for me and thee and thy fear all together.'

"Then he was ashamed and was quiet and I went to sleep but, man, he's a ruin."

Robert Jordan said nothing.

"All my life I have had this sadness at intervals," the woman said. "But it is not like the sadness of Pablo. It does not affect my resolution."

"I believe that."

"It may be it is like the times of a woman," she said. "It may be it is nothing," she paused, then went on. "I put great illusion in the Republic. I believe firmly in the Republic and I have faith. I believe in it with fervor as those who have religious faith believe in the mysteries."

"I believe you."

"And you have this same faith?"

"In the Republic?"

"Yes."

"Yes," he said, hoping it was true.

"I am happy," the woman said. "And you have no fear?"

"Not to die," he said truly.

"But other fears?"

"Only of not doing my duty as I should."

"Not of capture, as the other had?"

"No," he said truly. "Fearing that, one would be so preoccupied as to be useless."

"You are a very cold boy."

"No," he said. "I do not think so."

"No. In the head you are very cold."

"It is that I am very preoccupied with my work."

"But you do not like the things oflife?"

"Yes. Very much. But not to interfere with my work."

"You like to drink, I know. I have seen."

"Yes. Very much. But not to interfere with my work."

"And women?"

"I like them very much, but I have not given them much Importance."

"You do not care for them?"

"Yes. But I have not found one that moved me as they say they should move you."

"I think you lie."

"Maybe a little."

"But you care for Maria."

"Yes. Suddenly and very much."

"I, too. I care for her very much. Yes. Much."

"I, too," said Robert Jordan, and could feel his voice thickening. "I, too. Yes." It gave him pleasure to say it and he said it quite formally in Spanish. "I care for her very much."

"I will leave you alone with her after we have seen El Sordo."

Robert Jordan said nothing. Then he said, "That is not necessary."

"Yes, man. It is necessary. There is not much time."

"Did you see that in the hand?" he asked.

"No. Do not remember that nonsense of the hand."

She had put that away with all the other things that might do ill to the Republic.

Robert Jordan said nothing. He was looking at Maria putting away the dishes inside the cave. She wiped her hands and turned and smiled at him. She could not hear what Pilar was saying, but as she smiled at Robert Jordan she blushed dark under the tawny skin

and then smiled at him again.

"There is the day also," the woman said. "You have the night, but there is the day, too. Clearly, there is no such luxury as in Valencia in my time. But you could pick a few wild strawberries or something." She laughed.

Robert Jordan put his arm on her big shoulder. "I care for thee, too," he said. "I care for thee very much."

"Thou art a regular Don Juan Tenorio," the woman said, embarrassed now with affection. "There is a commencement of caring for everyone. Here comes Agustín."

Robert Jordan went into the cave and up to where Maria was standing. She watched him come toward her, her eyes bright, the blush again on her cheeks and throat.

"Hello, little rabbit," he said and kissed her on the mouth. She held him tight to her and looked in his face and said, "Hello. Oh, hello. Hello."

Fernando, still sitting at the table smoking a cigarette, stood up, shook his head and walked out, picking up his carbine from where it leaned against the wall.

"It is very unformal," he said to Pilar. "And I do not like it. You should take care of the girl."

"I am," said Pilar. "That comrade is her *nouio."*

"Oh," said Fernando. "In that case, since they are engaged, I encounter it to be perfectly normal."

"I am pleased," the woman said.

"Equally," Fernando agreed gravely. *"Salud,* Pilar."

"Where are you going?"

"To the upper post to relieve Primitivo."

"Where the hell are you going?" Agustín asked the grave little man as he came up.

"To my duty," Fernando said with dignity.

"Thy duty," said Agustín mockingly. "I besmirch the milk of thy duty." Then turning to the woman, "Where the un-nameable is this

vileness that I am to guard?"

"In the cave," Pilar said. "In two sacks. And I am tired of thy obscenity."

"I obscenity in the milk of thy tiredness," Agustín said.

"Then go and befoul thyself," Pilar said to him without heat.

"Thy mother," Agustín replied.

"Thou never had one," Pilar told him, the insults having reached the ultimate formalism in Spanish in which the acts are never stated but only implied.

"What are they doing in there?" Agustín now asked confidentially.

"Nothing," Pilar told him. *"Nada.* We are, after all, in the spring, animal."

"Animal," said Agustín, relishing the word. "Animal. And thou. Daughter of the great whore of whores. I befoul myself in the milk of the springtime.'

Pilar slapped him on the shoulder.

"You," she said, and laughed that booming laugh. "You lack variety in your cursing. But you have force. Did you see the planes?"

"I un-name in the milk of their motors," Agustín said, nodding his head and biting his lower lip.

"That's something," Pilar said. "That is really something. But really difficult of execution."

"At that altitude, yes," Agustín grinned. *"Desde luego.* But it is better to joke."

"Yes," the woman of Pablo said. "It is much better to joke, and you are a good man and you joke with force."

"Listen, Pilar," Agustín said seriously. "Something is preparing. It is not true?"

"How does it seem to you?"

"Of a foulness that cannot be worse. Those were many planes, woman. Many planes."

"And thou hast caught fear from them like all the others?"

"Qué va," said Agustín. "What do you think they are preparing?"

"Look," Pilar said. "From this boy coming for the bridges obviously the Republic is preparing an offensive. From these planes ob viously the Fascists are preparing to meet it. But why show the planes?"

"In this war are many foolish things," Agustín said. "In this war there is an idiocy without bounds."

"Clearly," said Pilar. "Otherwise we could not be here."

"Yes," said Agustín. "We swim within the idiocy for a year now. But Pablo is a man of much understanding. Pablo is very wily."

"Why do you say this?"

"I say it."

"But you must understand," Pilar explained. "It is now too late to be saved by wiliness and he has lost the other."

"I understand," said Agustín. "I know we must go. And since we must win to survive ultimately, it is necessary that the bridges must be blown. But Pablo, for the coward that he now is, is very smart."

"I, too, am smart."

"No, Pilar," Agustín said. "You are not smart. You are brave. You are loyal. You have decision. You have intuition. Much decision and much heart. But you are not smart."

"You believe that?" the woman asked thoughtfully.

"Yes, Pilar."

"The boy is smart," the woman said. "Smart and cold. Very cold in the head."

"Yes," Agustín said. "He must know his business or they would not have him doing this. But I do not know that he is smart. Pablo I *know* is smart."

"But rendered useless by his fear and his disinclination to action."

"But still smart."

"And what do you say?"

“Nothing. I try to consider it intelligently. In this moment we need to act with intelligence. After the bridge we must leave at once. All must be prepared. We must know for where we are leaving and how.”

“Naturally.”

“For this—Pablo. It must be done smartly.”

“I have no confidence in Pablo.”

“In this, yes.”

“No. You do not know how far he is ruined.”

“Pero es muy vivo. He is very smart. And if we do not do this smartly we are obscenitied.”

“I will think about it,” Pilar said. “I have the day to think about it.”

“For the bridges; the boy,” Agustín said. “This he must know. Look at the fine manner in which the other organized the train.”

“Yes,” Pilar said. “It was really he who planned aIL”

“You for energy and resolution,” Agustín said. “But Pablo for the moving. Pablo for the retreat. Force him now to study it.”

“You are a man of intelligence.”

“Intelligent, yes,” Agustín said. “But *sin picardía.* Pablo for that.”

“With his fear and all?”

“With his fear and aIL”

“And what do you think of the bridges?”

“It is necessary. That I know. Two things we must do. We must leave here and we must win. The bridges are necessary if we are to win.”

“If Pablo is so smart, why does he not see that?”

“He wants things as they are for his own weakness. He wants to stay in the eddy of his own weakness. But the river is rising. Forced to a change, he will be smart in the change. *Es muy vivo.”*

“It is good that the boy did not kill him.”

“Qué va. The gypsy wanted me to kill him last night. The gypsy is an animal.”

"You're an animal, too," she said. "But intelligent."

"We are both intelligent," Agustín said. "But the talent is Pablo!"

"But difficult to put up with. You do not know how ruined."

"Yes. But a talent. Look, Pilar. To make war all you need is intelligence. But to win you need talent and material."

"I will think it over," she said. "We must start now. We are late." Then, raising her voice, "English!" she called. *"Inglés!* Come on! Let us go."

Chapter Ten

"Let us rest," Pilar said to Robert Jordan. "Sit down here, Maria, and let us rest."

"We should continue," Robert Jordan said. "Rest when we get there. I must see this man."

"You will see him," the woman told him. "There is no hurry. Sit down here, Maria."

"Come on," Robert Jordan said. "Rest at the top."

"I rest now," the woman said, and sat down by the stream. The girl sat by her in the heather, the sun shining on her hair. Only Robert Jordan stood looking across the high mountain meadow with the trout brook running through it. There was heather growing where he stood. There were gray boulders rising from the yellow bracken that replaced the heather in the lower part of the meadow and below was the dark line of the pines.

"How far is it to El Sordo's?" he asked.

"Not far," the woman said. "It is across this open country, down into the next valley and above the timber at the head of the stream. Sit thee down and forget thy seriousness."

"I want to see him and get it over with."

"I want to bathe my feet," the woman said and, taking off her rope-soled shoes and pulling off a heavy wool stocking, she put her right foot into the stream. "My God, it's cold."

"We should have taken horses," Robert Jordan told her.

"This is good for me," the woman said. "This is what I have been missing. What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing, except that I am in a hurry."

“Then calm yourself. There is much time. What a day it is and how I am contented not to be in pine trees. You cannot imagine how one can tire of pine trees. Aren’t you tired of the *pines,guapa?”*

“I like them,” the girl said.

“What can you like about them?”

“I like the odor and the feel of the needles under foot. I like the wind in the high trees and the creaking they make against each other.”

“You like anything,” Pilar said. “You are a gift to any man if you could cook a little better. But the pine tree makes a forest of boredom. Thou hast never known a forest of beech, nor of oak, nor of chestnut. Those are forests. In such forests each tree differs and there is character and beauty. A forest of pine trees is boredom. What do you say, *Inglés?”*

“I like the pines, too.”

“Pero, venga,” Pilar said. “Two of you. So do I like the pines, but we have been too long in these pines. Also I am tired of the mountains. In mountains there are only two directions. Down and up and down leads only to the road and the towns of the Fascists.”

“Do you ever go to Segovia?”

“Qué va. With this face? This is a face that is known. How would you like to be ugly, beautiful one?” she said to Maria.

“Thou art not ugly.”

“Vamos, I’m not ugly. I was born ugly. All my life I have been ugly. You, *Inglés,* who know nothing about women. Do you know how an ugly woman feels? Do you know what it is to be ugly all your life and inside to feel that you are beautiful? It is very rare,” she put the other foot in the stream, then removed it. “God, it’s cold. Look at the water wagtail,” she said and pointed to the gray ball of a bird that was bobbing up and down on a stone up the stream. “Those are no good for anything. Neither to sing nor to eat. Only to jerk their tails up and down. Give me a cigarette, *Inglés,”* she said and taking it, lit it from a flint and steel lighter in the

pocket of her skirt. She puffed on the cigarette and looked at Maria and Robert Jordan.

"Life is very curious," she said, and blew smoke from her nostrils. "I would have made a good man, but I am all woman and all ugly. Yet many men have loved me and I have loved many men. It is curious. Listen, *Inglés,* this is interesting. Look at me, as ugly as I am. Look closely, *Inglés."*

"Thou art not ugly."

"Qué no? Don't lie to me. Or," she laughed the deep laugh. "Has it begun to work with thee? No. That is a joke. No. Look at the ugliness. Yet one has a feeling within one that blinds a man while he loves you. *You,* with that feeling, blind him, and blind yourself. Then one day, for no reason, he sees you ugly as you really are and he is not blind any more and then you see yourself as ugly as he sees you and you lose your man and your feeling. Do you *understand,guapa?"* She patted the girl on the shoulder.

"No," said Maria. "Because thou art not ugly."

"Try to use thy head and not thy heart, and listen," Pilar said. "I am telling you things of much interest. Does it not interest you, *Inglés?"*

"Yes. But we should go."

"Qué va, go. I am very well here. Then," she went on, addressing herself to Robert Jordan now as though she were speaking to a classroom; almost as though she were lecturing. "After a while, when you are as ugly as I am, as ugly as women can be, then, as I say, after a while the feeling, the idiotic feeling that you are beautiful, grows slowly in one again. It grows like a cabbage. And then, when the feeling is grown, another man sees you and thinks you are beautiful and it is all to do over. Now I think I am past it, but it still might come. *You* are *lucky, guapa,* that you are not ugly."

"But I *am* ugly," Maria insisted.

"Ask *him,"* said Pilar. "And don't put thy feet in the stream because it will freeze them."

"If Roberto says we should go, I think we should go," Maria said.

"Listen to you," Pilar said. "I have as much at stake in this as thy Roberto and I say that we are well off resting here by the stream and that there is much time. Furthermore, I like to talk. It is the only civilized thing we have. How otherwise can we divert ourselves? Does what I say not hold interest for you, *Inglés?"*

"You speak very well. But there are other things that interest me more than talk of beauty or lack of beauty."

"Then let us talk of what interests thee."

"Where were you at the start of the movement?"

"In my town."

"Avila?"

"Qué va, Avila."

"Pablo said he was from Avila."

"He lies. He wanted to take a big city for his town. It was this town," and she named a town.

"And what happened?"

"Much," the woman said. "Much. And all of it ugly. Even that which was glorious."

"Tell me about it," Robert Jordan said.

"It is brutal," the woman said. "I do not like to tell it before the girl."

"Tell it," said Robert Jordan. "And if it is not for her, that she should not listen."

"I can hear it," Maria said. She put her hand on Robert Jordan's.

"There is nothing that I cannot hear."

"It isn't whether you can hear it," Pilar said. "It is whether I should tell it to thee and make thee bad dreams."

"I will not get bad dreams from a story," Maria told her. *"You* think after all that has happened with us I should get bad dreams from a story?"

"Maybe it will give the *Inglés* bad dreams."

"Try it and see."

"No, *Inglés,* I am not joking. Didst thou see the start of the movement in any small town?"

"No," Robert Jordan said.

"Then thou hast seen nothing. Thou hast seen the ruin that now is Pablo, but you should have seen Pablo on that day."

"Tell it."

"Nay. I do not want to."

"Tell it."

"All right, then. I will tell it truly as it was. But thee, *guapa,* if it reaches a point that it molests thee, tell me."

"I will not listen to it if it molests me," Maria told her. "It cannot be worse than many things."

"I believe it can," the woman said. "Give me another cigarette, *Inglés,* and *Vámonos."*

The girl leaned back against the heather on the bank of the stream and Robert Jordan stretched himself out, his shoulders against the ground and his head against a clump of the heather. He reached out and found Maria's hand and held it in his, rubbing their two hands against the heather until she opened her hand and laid it flat on top of his as they listened.

"It was early in the morning when the *civiles* surrendered at the barracks," Pilar began.

"You had assaulted the barracks?" Robert Jordan asked.

"Pablo had surrounded it in the dark, cut the telephone wires, placed dynamite under one wall and called on the *guardia civil* to surrender. They would not. And at daylight he blew the wall open. There was fighting. Two *civiles* were killed. Four were wounded and four surrendered.

"We all lay on roofs and on the ground and at the edge of walls and of buildings in the early morning light and the dust cloud of the explosion had not yet settled, for it rose high in the air and there was no wind to carry it, and all of us were firing into the broken side of the building, loading and firing into the smoke, and from

within there was still the flashing of rifles and then there was a shout from in the smoke not to fire more, and out came the four *civiles* with their hands up. A big part of the roof had fallen in and the wall was gone and they came out to surrender.

"'Are there more inside?' Pablo shouted.

"'There are wounded.'

"'Guard these,' Pablo said to four who had come up from where we were firing. 'Stand there. Against the wall,' he told the *civiles.* The four *civiles* stood against the wall, dirty, dusty, smoke-grimed, with the four who were guarding them pointing their guns at them and Pablo and the others went in to finish the wounded.

"After they had done this and there was no longer any noise of the wounded, neither groaning, nor crying out, nor the noise of shooting in the barracks, Pablo and the others came out and Pablo had his shotgun over his back and was carrying in his hand a Mauser pistol.

'"Look, Pilar,' he said. 'This was in the hand of the officer who killed himself. Never have I fired a pistol. You,' he said to one of the guards, 'show me how it works. No. Don't show me. Tell me.'

"The four *civiles* had stood against the wall, sweating and saying nothing while the shooting had gone on inside the barracks. They were all tall men with the faces of *guardias civiles,* which is the same model of face as mine is. Except that their faces were covered with the small stubble of this their last morning of not yet being shaved and they stood there against the wall and said nothing.

'"You,' said Pablo to the one who stood nearest him. 'Tell me how it works.'

'"Pull the small lever down,' the man said in a very dry voice.

'Pull the receiver back and let it snap forward.'

'"What is the receiver?' asked Pablo, and he looked at the four *civiles.* 'What is the recei ver?'

'"The block on top of the action.'

"Pablo pulled it back, but it stuck. 'What now?' he said. 'It is

jammed. You have lied to me.'

"'Pull it farther back and let it snap lightly forward,' the *civil* said, and I have never heard such a tone of voice. It was grayer than a morning without sunrise.

"Pablo pulled and let go as the man had told him and the block snapped forward into place and the pistol was cocked with the hammer back. It is an ugly pistol, small in the round handle, large and flat in the barrel, and unwieldy. All this time the *civiles* had been watching him and they had said nothing.

"'What are you going to do with us?' one asked him.

"'Shoot thee,' Pablo said.

"'When?' the man asked in the same gray voice.

"'Now,' said Pablo.

"'Where?' asked the man.

"'Here,' said Pablo. 'Here. Now. Here and now. Have you anything to say?'

" 'Nada, , said the *civil.* 'Nothing. But it is an ugly thing.'

"'And you are an ugly thing,' Pablo said. 'You murderer of peasants. You who would shoot your own mother.'

"'I have never killed anyone,' the *civil* said. 'And do not speak of my mother.'

"'Show us how to die. You, who have always done the killing.'

"'There is no necessity to insult us,' another *civil* said. 'And we know how to die.'

..'Kneel down against the wall with your heads against the wall,' Pablo told them. The *civiles* looked at one another.

.. 'Kneel, I say,' Pablo said. 'Get down and kneel.'

"'How does it seem to you, Paco?' one *civil* said to the tallest, who had spoken with Pablo about the pistol. He wore a corporal's stripes on his sleeves and was sweating very much although the early morning was still cool.

"'It is as well to kneel,' he answered. 'It is of no importance.'

"'It is closer to the earth,' the first one who had spoken said,

trying to make a joke, but they were all too grave for a joke and no one smiled.

"'Then let us kneel,' the first *civil* said, and the four knelt, looking very awkward with their heads against the wall and their hands by their sides, and Pablo passed behind them and shot each in turn in the back of the head with the pistol, going from one to another and putting the barrel of the pistol against the back of their heads, each man slipping down as he fired. I can hear the pistol still, sharp and yet muffled, and see the barrel jerk and the head of the man drop forward. One held his head still when the pistol touched it. One pushed his head forward and pressed his forehead against the stone. One shivered in his whole body and his head was shaking. Only one put his hands in front of his eyes, and he was the last one, and the four bodies were slumped against the wall when Pablo turned away from them and came toward us with the pistol still in his hand.

"'Hold this for me, Pilar,' he said. 'I do not know how to put down the hammer,' and he handed me the pistol and stood there looking at the four guards as they lay against the wall of the barracks. All those who were with us stood there too, looking at them, and no one said anything.

"We had won the town and it was still early in the morning and no one had eaten nor had anyone drunk coffee and we looked at each other and we were all powdered with dust from the blowing up of the barracks, as powdered as men are at a threshing, and I stood holding the pistol and it was heavy in my hand and I felt weak in the stomach when I looked at the guards dead there against the wall; they all as gray and as dusty as we were, but each one was now moistening with his blood the dry dirt by the wall where they lay. And as we stood there the sun rose over the far hills and shone now on the road where we stood and on the white wall of the barracks and the dust in the air was golden in that first sun and the peasant who was beside me looked at the wall of the barracks and

what lay there and then looked at us and then at the sun and said, *'Vaya,* a day that commences.'

"'Now let us go and get coffee,' I said.

"'Good, Pilar, good,' he said. And we went up into the town tothe Plaza, and those were the last people who were shot in the village."

"What happend to the others?" Robert Jordan asked. "Were there no other fascists in the village?"

"Qué va, were there no other fascists? There were more than twenty. But none was shot."

"What was done?"

"Pablo had them beaten to death with flails and thrown from the top of the cliff into the river."

"All twenty?"

"I will tell you. It is not so simple. And in my life never do I wish to see such a scene as the flailing to death in the plaza on the top of the cliff above the river.

"The town is built on the high bank above the river and there is a square there with a fountain and there are benches and there are big trees that give a shade for the benches. The balconies of the houses look out on the plaza. Six streets enter on the plaza and there is an arcade from the houses that goes around the plaza so that one can walk in the shade of the arcade when the sun is hot. On three sides of the plaza is the arcade and on the fourth side is the walk shaded by the trees beside the edge of the cliff with, far below, the river. It is three hundred feet down to the river.

"Pablo organized it all as he did the attack on the barracks. First he had the entrances to the streets blocked off with carts as though to organize the plaze for a *capea.* For an amateur bullfight. The fascists were all held in the *Ayuntamiento,* the city hall, which was the largest building on one side of the plaza. It was there the clock was set in the wall and it was in the buildings under the arcade that the club of the fascists was. And under the arcade on the sidewalk

in front of their club was where they had their chairs and tables for their club. It was there, before the movement, that they were accustomed to take the aperitifs. The chairs and the tables were of wicker. It looked like a cafe but was more elegant."

"But was there no fighting to take them?"

"Pablo had them seized in the night before he assaulted the barracks. But he had already surrounded the barracks. They were all seized in their homes at the same hour the attack started. That was intelligent. Pablo is an organizer. Otherwise he would have had people attacking him at his flanks and at his rear while he was assaulting the barracks of the *guardia civil.*

"Pablo is very intelligent but very brutal. He had this of the village well planned and well ordered. Listen. After the assault was successful, and the last four guards had surrendered, and he had shot them against the wall, and we had drunk coffee at the cafe that always opened earliest in the morning by the corner from which the early bus left, he proceeded to the organization of the plaza. Carts were piled exactly as for a *capea* except that the side toward the river was not enclosed. That was left open. Then Pablo ordered the priest to confess the fascists and give them the necessary sacraments."

"Where was this done?"

"In the *Ayuntamiento,* as I said. There was a great crowd outside and while this was going on inside with the priest, there was some levity outside and shouting of obscenities, but most of the people were very serious and respectful. Those who made jokes were those who were already drunk from the celebration of the taking of the barracks and there were useless characters who would have been drunk at any time.

"While the priest was engaged in these duties, Pablo organized those in the plaza into two lines.

"He placed them in two lines as you would place men for a rope pulling contest, or as they stand in a city to watch the ending of a

bicycle road race with just room for the cyclists to pass between, or as men stood to allow the passage of a holy image in a procession. Two meters was left between the lines and they extended from the door of the *Ayuntamiento* clear across the plaza to the edge of the cliff. So that, from the doorway of the *Ayuntamiento,* looking across the plaza, one coming out would see two solid lines of people waiting.

"They were armed with flails such as are used to beat out the grain and they were a good flail's length apart. All did not have flails, as enough flails could not be obtained. But most had flails obtained from the store of Don Guillermo Martin, who was a fascist and sold all sorts of agricultural implements. And those who did not have flails had heavy herdsman's clubs, or ox-goads, and some had wooden pitchforks; those with wooden tines that are used to fork the chaff and straw into the air after the flailing. Some had sickles and reaping hooks but these Pablo placed at the far end where the lines reached the edge of the cliff.

"These lines were quiet and it was a clear day, as today is clear, and there were clouds high in the sky, as there are now, and the plaza was not yet dusty for there had been a heavy dew in the night, and the trees cast a shade over the men in the lines and you could hear the water running from the brass pipe in the mouth of the lion and falling into the bowl of the fountain where the women bring the water jars to fill them.

"Only near the *Ayuntamiento,* where the priest was complying with his duties with the fascists, was there any ribaldry, and that came from those worthless ones who, as I said, were already drunk and were crowded around the windows shouting obscenities and jokes in bad taste in through the iron bars of the windows. Most of the men in the lines were waiting quietly and I heard one say to another, 'Will there be women?'

"And another said, 'I hope to Christ, no.'

"Then one said, 'Here is the woman of Pablo. Listen, Pilar. Will

there be women?'

"I looked at him and he was a peasant dressed in his Sunday jacket and sweating heavily and I said, 'No, Joaquín . There are no women. We are not killing the women. Why should we kill their women?'

"And he said, 'Thanks be to Christ, there are no women and when does it start?'

"And I said, 'As soon as the priest finishes.'

'" And the priest?'

'"I don't know,' I told him and I saw his face working and the sweat coming down on his forehead. 'I have never killed a man,' he said.

"'Then you will learn,' the peasant next to him said. 'But I do not think one blow with this will kill a man,' and he held his flail in both hands and looked at it with doubt.

"'That is the beauty of it,' another peasant said. 'There must be many blows.'

"'They have taken Valladolid. *They* have Avila,' some one said. 'I heard that before we came into town.'

"They will never take this town. *This* town is ours. We have struck ahead of them,' I said, 'Pablo is not one to wait for them to strike.'

'"Pablo is able,' another said. 'But in this finishing off of the *civiles* he was egoistic. Don't you think so, Pilar?'

'"Yes,' I said. 'But now all are participating in this.'

'"Yes,' he said. 'It is well organized. But why do we not hear more news of the movement?'

'"Pablo cut the telephone wires before the assault on the barracks. They are not yet repaired.'

"'Ah,' he said. 'It is for this we hear nothing. I had my news from the road mender's station early this morning.'

'"Why is this done thus, Pilar?' he said to me.

"'To save bullets,' I said. 'And that each man should have his

share in the responsibility.'

"'That it should start then. That it should start.' And I looked at him and saw that he was crying.

"'Why are you crying, Joaquín ?' I asked him. 'This is not to cry about.'

"'I cannot help it, Pilar,' he said. 'I have never killed anyone.'

"If you have not seen the day of revolution in a small town where all know all in the town and always have known all, you have seen nothing. And on this day most of the men in the double line across the plaza wore the clothes in which they worked in the fields, having come into town hurriedly, but some, not knowing how one should dress for the first day of a movement, wore their clothes for Sundays or holidays, and these, seeing that the others, including those who had attacked the barracks, wore their oldest clothes, were ashamed of being wrongly dressed. But they did not like to take off their jackets for fear of losing them, or that they might be stolen by the worthless ones, and so they stood, sweating in the sun and waiting for it to commence.

"Then the wind rose and the dust was now dry in the plaza for the men walking and standing and shuffling had loosened it and it commenced to blow and a man in a dark blue Sunday jacket shouted 'Agua! Agua!' and the caretaker of the plaza, whose duty it was to sprinkle the plaza each morning with a hose, came and turned the hose on and commenced to lay the dust at the edge of the plaza, and then toward the center. Then the two lines fell back and let him lay the dust over the center of the plaza; the hose sweeping in wide arcs and the water glistening in the sun and the men leaning on their flails or the clubs or the white wood pitchforks and watching the sweep of the stream of water. And then, when the plaza was nicely moistened and the dust settled, the lines formed up again and a peasant shouted, 'When do we get the first fascist? When does the first one come out of the box?'

"'Soon,' Pablo shouted from the door of the *Ayuntamiento*. 'Soon

the first one comes out.' His voice was hoarse from shouting in the assault and from the smoke of the barracks.

'"What's the delay?' some one asked.

'"They're still occupied with their sins,' Pablo shouted.

"'Clearly, there are twenty of them,' a man said.

"'More,' said another.

'"Among twenty there are many sins to recount.'

"'Yes, but I think it's a trick to gain time. Surely facing such an emergency one could not remember one's sins except for the biggest.'

'"Then have patience. For with more than twenty of them there are enough of the biggest sins to take some time.'

"'I have patience,' said the other. 'But it is better to get it over with. Both for them and for us. It is July and there is much work. We have harvested but we have not threshed. We are not yet in the time of fairs and festivals.'

'"But this will be a fair and festival today,' another said. 'The Fair of Liberty and from this day, when these are extinguished, the town and the land are ours.'

'"We thresh fascists today,' said one, 'and out of the chaff comes the freedom of this pueblo.'

'"We must administer it well to deserve it,' said another. 'Pilar,' he said to me, 'when do we have a meeting for organization?'

'"Immediately after this is completed,' I told him. 'In the same building of the *Ayuntamiento.'*

"I was wearing one of the three-cornered patent leather hats of the *guardia civil* as a joke and I had put the hammer down on the pistol, holding it with my thumb to lower it as I pulled on the trigger as seemed natural, and the pistol was held in a rope I had around my waist, the long barrel stuck under the rope. And when I put it on the joke seemed very good to me, although afterwards I wished I had taken the holster of the pistol instead of the hat. But one of the men in the line said to me, 'Pilar, daughter. It seems to

me bad taste for thee to wear that hat. Now we have finished with such things as the *guardia civil.'*

"'Then,' I said, 'I will take it off.' And I did.

'"Give it to me,' he said. 'It should be destroyed.'

"And as we were at the far end of the line where the walk runs along the cliffby the river, he took the hat in his hand and sailed it off over the cliff with the motion a herdsman makes throwing a stone underhand at the bul\s to herd them. The hat sailed far out into space and we could see it smal\er and smaller, the patent leather shining in the clear air, sailing down to the river. I looked back over the square and at al\ the windows and all the balconies there were people crowded and there was the double line of men across the square to the doorway of the *Ayuntamiento* and the crowd swarmed outside against the windows of that building and there was the noise of many people talking, and then I heard a shout and some one said 'Here comes the first one,' and it was Don Benito Garcia, the Mayor, and he came out bareheaded walking slowly from the door and down the porch and nothing happened; and he walked between the line of men with the flails and nothing happened. He passed two men, four men, eight men, ten men and nothing happened and he was walking between that line of men, his head up, his fat face gray, his eyes looking ahead and then flickering from side to side and walking steadily. And nothing happened.

"From a balcony some one cried out, *'Qué pasa, cobardes?* What is the matter, cowards?' and still Don Benito walked along between the men and nothing happened. Then I saw a man three men down from where I was standing and his face was working and he was biting his lips and his hands were white on his flail. I saw him looking toward Don Benito, watching him come on. And still nothing happened. Then, just before Don Benito came abreast of this man, the man raised his flail high so that it struck the man beside him and smashed a blow at Don Benito that hit him on the

side of the head and Don Benito looked at him and the man struck again and shouted, ‘That for you, *Cabron,’* and the blow hit Don Benito in the face and he raised his hands to his face and they beat him until he fell and the man who had struck him first called to others to help him and he pulled on the collar of Don Benito’s shirt and others took hold of his arms and with his face in the dust of the plaza, they dragged him over the walk to the edge of the cliff and threw him over and into the river. And the man who hit him first was kneeling by the edge of the cliff looking over after him and saying, ‘The Cabron! The Cabron! Oh, the Cabron!’ He was a tenant of Don Benito and they had never gotten along together. There had been a dispute about a piece of land by the river that Don Benito had taken from this man and let to another and this man had long hated him. This man did not join the line again but sat by the cliff looking down where Don Benito had fal\en.

“After Don Benito no one would come out. There was no noise now in the plaza as all were waiting to see who it was that would come out. Then a drunkard shouted in a great voice, *‘Qué salga el toro!* Let the bull out!’

“Then some one from by the windows of the *Ayuntamiento* yelled, ‘They won’t move! They are all praying!’

“Another drunkard shouted, ‘Pull them out. Come on, pull them out. The time for praying is finished.’

“But none came out and then I saw a man coming out of the door.

“It was Don Federico González, who owned the mill and feed store and was a fascist of the first order. He was tall and thin and his hair was brushed over the top of his head from one side to the other to cover a baldness and he wore a nightshirt that was tucked into his trousers. He was barefooted as when he had been taken from his home and he walked ahead of Pablo holding his hands above his head, and Pablo walked behind him with the barrels of his shotgun pressing against the back of Don Federico González

until Don Federico entered the double line. But when Pablo left him and returned to the door of the *Ayuntamiento,* Don Federico could not walk forward, and stood there, his eyes turned up to heaven and his hands reaching up as though they would grasp the sky.

‘”He has no legs to walk,’ some one said.

“ ‘What’s the matter, Don Federico? Can’t you walk?’ some one shouted to him. But Don Federico stood there with his hands up and only his lips were moving.

‘”Get on,’ Pablo shouted to him from the steps. ‘Walk.’

“Don Federico stood there and could not move. One of the drunkards poked him in the backside with a flail handle and Don Federico gave a quick jump as a balky horse might, but still stood in the same place, his hands up, and his eyes up toward the sky.

“Then the peasant who stood beside me said, ‘This is shameful. I have nothing against him but such a spectacle must terminate.’ So he walked down the line and pushed through to where Don Federico was standing and said, ‘With your permission,’ and hit him a great blow alongside of the head with a club.

“Then Don Federico dropped his hands and put them over the top of his head where the bald place was and with his head bent and covered by his hands, the thin long hairs that covered the bald place escaping through his fingers, he ran fast through the double line with flails falling on his back and shoulders until he fell and those at the end of the line picked him up and swung him over the cliff. Never did he open his mouth from the moment he came out pushed by the shotgun of Pablo. His only difficulty was to move forward. It was as though he had no command of his legs.

“After Don Federico, I saw there was a concentration of the hardest men at the end of the lines by the edge of the cliff and I left there and I went to the Arcade of the *Ayuntamiento* and pushed aside two drunkards and looked in the window. In the big room of the *Ayuntamiento* they were all kneeling in a half circle praying and the priest was kneeling and praying with them. Pablo and one

named *Cuatro Dedos,* Four Fingers, a cobbler, who was much with Pablo then, and two others were standing with shotguns and Pablo said to the priest, 'Who goes now?' and the priest went on praying and did not answer him.

"'Listen, you,' Pablo said to the priest in his hoarse voice, 'who goes now? Who is ready now?'

"The priest would not speak to Pablo and acted as though he were not there and I could see Pablo was becoming very angry.

"'Let us all go together,' Don Ricardo Montalvo, who was a land owner, said to Pablo, raising his head and stopping praying to speak.

" 'Qué va,' said Pablo. 'One at a time as you are ready.'

"'Then I go now,' Don Ricardo said. 'I'll never be any more ready.' The priest blessed him as he spoke and blessed him again as he stood up, without interrupting his praying, and held up a crucifix for Don Ricardo to kiss and Don Ricardo kissed it and then turned and said to Pablo, 'Nor ever again as ready. You *Cabron* of the bad milk. Let us go.'

"Don Ricardo was a short man with gray hair and a thick neck and he had a shirt on with no collar. He was bow-legged from much horseback riding. 'Goodbye,' he said to all those who were kneeling. 'Don't be sad. To die is nothing. The only bad thing is to die at the hands of this *canalla.* Don't touch me,' he said to Pablo. 'Don't touch me with your shotgun.'

"He walked out of the front of the *Ayuntamiento* with his gray hair and his small gray eyes and his thick neck looking very short and angry. He looked at the double line of peasants and he spat on the ground. He could spit actual saliva which, in such a circumstance, as you should know, *Inglés,* is very rare and he said, *'Arriba España!* Down with the miscalled Republic and I obscenity in the milk of your fathers.'

"So they clubbed him to death very quickly because of the insult, beating him as soon as he reached the first of the men,

beating him as he tried to walk with his head up, beating him until he fell and chopping at him with reaping hooks and the sickles, and many men bore him to the edge of the cliff to throw him over and there was blood now on their hands and on their clothing, and now began to be the feeling that these who came out were truly enemies and should be killed.

"Until Don Ricardo came out with that fierceness and calling those insults, many in the line would have given much, I am sure, never to have been in the line. And if anyone had shouted from the line, 'Come, let us pardon the rest of them. Now they have had their lesson,' I am sure most would have agreed.

"But Don Ricardo with all his bravery did a great disservice to the others. For he aroused the men in the line and where, before, they were performing a duty and with no great taste for it, now they were angry, and the difference was apparent.

"'Let the priest out and the thing will go faster,' some one shouted.

"'Let out the priest.'

"'We've had three thieves, let us have the priest.'

'"Two thieves,' a short peasant said to the man who had shouted. 'It was two thieves with Our Lord.'

'"Whose Lord?' the man said, his face angry and red.

"Tn the manner of speaking it is said Our Lord.'

'"He isn't my Lord; not in joke,' said the other. 'And thee hadst best watch thy mouth if thou dost not want to walk between the lines.'

'"I am as good a Libertarian Republican as thou,' the short peasant said. 'I struck Don Ricardo across the mouth. I struck Don Federico across the back. I missed Don Benito. But I say Our Lord is the formal way of speaking of the man in question and that it was two thieves.'

'"I obscenity in the milk of thy Republicanism. You speak of Don this and Don that.'

‘’Here are they so called.’

“ ‘Not by me, the *cabrones.* And thy Lord— Hi! Here comes a new one!’

“It was then that we saw a disgraceful sight, for the man who walked out of the doorway of the *Ayuntamiento* was Don Faustino Rivero, the oldest son of his father, Don Celestino Rivero, a land owner. He was tall and his hair was yellow and it was freshly combed back from his forehead for he always carried a comb in his pocket and he had combed his hair now before coming out. He was a great annoyer of girls, and he was a coward, and he had always wished to be an amateur bullfighter. He went much with gypsies and with bullfighters and with bull raisers and delighted to wear the Andalucian costume, but he had no courage and was considered a joke. One time he was announced to appear in an amateur benefit fight for the old people’s home in Avila and to kill a bull from on horseback in the Andalucian style, which he had spent much time practising, and when he had seen the size of the bull that had been substituted for him in place of the little one, weak in the legs, he had picked out himself, he had said he was sick and, some said, put three fingers down his throat to make himself vomit.

“When the lines saw him, they commenced to shout, *‘Hola,* Don Faustino. Take care not to vomit.’

“ ‘Listen to me, Don Faustino. There are beautiful girls over the cliff.’

“’Don Faustino. Wait a minute and we will bring out a bull bigger than the other.’

“And another shouted, ‘Listen to me, Don Faustino. Hast thou ever heard speak of death?’

“Don Faustino stood there, still acting brave. He was still under the impulse that had made him announce to the others that he was going out. It was the same impulse that had made him announce himself for the bullfight. That had made him believe and hope that he could be an amateur matador. Now he was inspired by the

example of Don Ricardo and he stood there looking both handsome and brave and he made his face scornful. But he could not speak.

‘”Come, Don Faustino,’ some one called from the line. ‘Come, Don Faustino. Here is the biggest bull of all.’

“Don Faustino stood looking out and I think as he looked, that there was no pity for him on either side of the line. Still he looked both handsome and superb; but time was shortening and there was only one direction to go.

“’Don Faustino,’ some one called. ‘What are you waiting for, Don Faustino?’

“’He is preparing to vomit,’ some one said and the lines laughed.

‘”Don Faustino,’ a peasant called. ‘Vomit if it will give thee pleasure. To me it is all the same.’

“Then, as we watched, Don Faustino looked along the lines and across the square to the cliff and then when he saw the cliff and the emptyness beyond, he turned quickly and ducked back toward the entrance of the *Ayuntamiento*.

“All the lines roared and some one shouted in a high voice, ‘Where do you go, Don Faustino? Where do you go?’

“’He goes to throw up,’ shouted another and they all laughed again.

“Then we saw Don Faustino coming out again with Pablo behind him with the shotgun. All of his style was gone now. The sight of the lines had taken away his type and his style and he came out now with Pablo behind him as though Pablo were cleaning a street and Don Faustino was what he was pushing ahead of him. Don Faustino came out now and he was crossing himself and praying and then he put his hands in front of his eyes and walked down the steps toward the lines.

“’Leave him alone,’ some one shouted. ‘Don’t touch him.’

“The lines understood and no one made a move to touch Don Faustino and, with his hands shaking and held in front of his eyes, and with his mouth moving, he walked along between the lines.

“No one said anything and no one touched him and, when he was halfway through the lines, he could go no farther and fell to his knees.

“No one struck him. I was walking along parallel to the line to see what happened to him and a peasant leaned down and lifted him to his feet and said, ‘Get up, Don Faustino, and keep walking. The bull has not yet come out.’

“Don Faustino could not walk alone and the peasant in a black smock helped him on one side and another peasant in a black smock and herdsman’s boots helped him on the other, supporting him by the arms and Don Faustino walking along between the lines with his hands over his eyes, his lips never quiet, and his yellow hair slicked on his head and shining in the sun, and as he passed the peasants would say, ‘Don Faustino, *bum provecho.* Don Faustino, that you should have a good appetite,’ and others said, ‘Don Faustino, *a sus ordenes.* Don Faustino at your orders,’ and one, who had failed at bullfighting himself, said, ‘Don Faustino. *Matador, a sus ordenes,’* and another said, ‘Don Faustino, there are beautiful girls in heaven, Don Faustino.’ And they walked Don Faustino through the lines, holding him close on either side, holding him up as he walked, with him with his hands over his eyes. But he must have looked through his fingers, because when they came to the edge of the cliff with him, he knelt again, throwing himself down and clutching the ground and holding to the grass, saying, ‘No. No. No. Please. NO. Please. Please. No. No.’

“Then the peasants who were with him and the others, the hard ones of the end of the line, squatted quickly behind him as he knelt, and gave him a rushing push and he was over the edge without ever having been beaten and you heard him crying loud and high as he fell.

“It was then I knew that the lines had become cruel and it was first the insults of Don Ricardo and second the cowardice of Don Faustino that had made them so.

“’Let us have another,’ a peasant called out and another peasant slapped him on the back and said, ‘Don Faustino! What a thing! Don Faustino!’

“’He’s seen the big bull now,’ another said. ‘Throwing up will never help him, now.’

“’In my life,’ another peasant said, ‘in my life I’ve never seen a thing like Don Faustino.’

“’There are others,’ another peasant said. ‘Have patience. Who knows what we may yet see?’

“’There may be giants and dwarfs,’ the first peasant said. ‘There may be Negroes and rare beasts from Africa. But for me never, never will there be anything like Don Faustino. But let’s have another one! Come on. Let’s have another one!’

“The drunkards were handing around bottles of an is and cognac that they had looted from the bar of the club of the fascists, drinking them down like wine, and many of the men in the lines were beginning to be a little drunk, too, from drinking after the strong emotion of Don Benito, Don Federico, Don Ricardo and especially Don Faustino. Those who did not drink from the bottles of liquor were drinking from leather wineskins that were passed about and one handed a wineskin to me and I took a long drink, letting the wine run cool down my throat from the leather *bota* for I was very thirsty, too.

“’To kill gives much thirst,’ the man with the wineskin said to me.

“ ‘Qué va,’ I said. ‘Hast thou killed?’

‘”We have killed four,’ he said, proudly. ‘Not counting the *civiles.* Is it true that thee killed one of the *civiles,* Pilar?’

‘”Not one,’ I said. ‘I shot into the smoke when the wall fell, as did the others. That is all.’

‘”Where got thee the pistol, Pilar?’

‘”From Pablo. Pablo gave it to me after he killed the *civiles.’*

“’Killed he them with this pistol?’

‘”With no other,’ I said. ‘And then he armed me with it.’

‘”Can I see it, Pilar? Can I hold it?’

‘”Why not, man?’ I said, and I took it out from under the rope and handed it to him. But I was wondering why no one else had come out and just then who should come out but Don Guillermo Martln from whose store the flails, the herdsman’s clubs, and the wooden pitchforks had been taken. Don Guillermo was a fascist but otherwise there was nothing against him.

“It is true he paid little to those who made the flails but he charged little for them too and if one did not wish to buy flails from Don Guillermo, it was possible to make them for nothing more than the cost of the wood and the leather. He had a rude way of speaking and he was undoubtedly a fascist and a member of their club and he sat at noon and at evening in the cane chairs of their club to read *El Debate,* to have his shoes shined, and to drink vermouth and seltzer and eat roasted almonds, dried shrimps, and anchovies. But one does not kill for that, and I am sure ifit had not been for the insults of Don Ricardo Montalvo and the lamentable spectacle of Don Faustino, and the drinking consequent on the emotion of them and the others, some one would have shouted, ‘That Don Guillermo should go in peace. We have his flails. Let him go.’

“Because the people of this town are as kind as they can be cruel and they have a natural sense of justice and a desire to do that which is right. But cruelty had entered into the lines and also drunkenness or the beginning of drunkenness and the lines were not as they were when Don Benito had come out. I do not know how it is in other countries, and no one cares more for the pleasure of drinking than I do, but in Spain drunkenness, when produced by other elements than wine, is a thing of great ugliness and the people do things that they would not have done. Is it not so in your country, *Inglés?”*

“It is so,” Robert Jordan said. “When I was seven years old and going with my mother to attend a wedding in the state of Ohio at

which I was to be the boy of a pair of boy and girl who carried flowers—"

"Did you do that?" asked Maria. "How nice!"

"In this town a Negro was hanged to a lamp post and later burned. It was an arc light. A light which lowered from the post to the pavement. And he was hoisted, first by the mechanism which was used to hoist the arc light but this broke—"

"A Negro," Maria said. "How barbarous!"

"Were the people drunk?" asked Pilar. "Were they drunk thus to burn a Negro?"

"I do not know," Robert Jordan said. "Because I saw it only looking out from under the blinds of a window in the house which stood on the corner where the arc light was. The street was full of people and when they lifted the Negro up for the second time—"

"If you had only seven years and were in a house, you could not tell if they were drunk or not," Pilar said.

"As I said, when they lifted the Negro up for the second time, my mother pulled me away from the window, so I saw no more," Robert Jordan said. "But since I have had experiences which demonstrate that drunkenness is the same in my country. It is ugly and brutal."

"You were too young at seven," Maria said. "You were too young for such things. I have never seen a Negro except in a circus. Unless the Moors are Negroes."

"Some are Negroes and some are not," Pilar said. "I can talk to you of the Moors."

"Not as Ican," Maria said. "Nay, not as I can."

"Don't speak of such things," Pilar said. "It is unhealthy. Where were we?"

"Speaking of the drunkenness of the lines," Robert Jordan said.

"Go on."

"It is not fair to say drunkenness," Pilar said. "For, yet, they were a long way from drunkenness. But already there was a change

in them, and when Don Guillermo came out, standing straight, near-sighted, gray-headed, of medium height, with a shirt with a collar button but no collar, standing there and crossing himself once and looking ahead, but seeing little without his glasses, but walking forward well and calmly, he was an appearance to excite pity. But some one shouted from the line, 'Here, Don Guillermo. Up here, Don Guillermo. In this direction. Here we all have your products.'

"They had had such success joking at Don Faustino that they could not see, now, that Don Guillermo was a different thing, and if Don Guillermo was to be killed, he should be killed quickly and with dignity.

"'Don Guillermo,' another shouted. 'Should we send to the house for thy spectacles?'

"Don Guillermo's house was no house, since he had not much money and was only a fascist to be a snob and to console himself that he must work for little, running a wooden-implement shop. He was a fascist, too, from the religiousness of his wife which he accepted as his own due to his love for her. He lived in an apartment in the building three houses down the square and when Don Guillermo stood there, looking near-sightedly at the lines, the double lines he knew he must enter, a woman started to scream from the balcony of the apartment where he lived. She could see him from the balcony and she was his wife.

"'Guillermo,' she cried. 'Guillermo. Wait and I will be with thee.'

"Don Guillermo turned his head toward where the shouting came from. He could not see her. He tried to say something but he could not. Then he waved his hand in the direction the woman had called from and started to walk between the lines.

"'Guillermo!' she cried. 'Guillermo! Oh, Guillermo!'" She was holding her hands on the rail of the balcony and shaking back and forth. 'Guillermo!'

"Don Guillermo waved his hand again toward the noise and walked into the lines with his head up and you would not have

known what he was feeling except for the color of his face.

"Then some drunkard yelled, 'Guillermo!' from the lines, imitating the high cracked voice of his wife and Don Guillermo rushed toward the man, blindly, with tears now running down his cheeks and the man hit him hard across the face with his flail and Don Guillermo sat down from the force of the blow and sat there crying, but not from fear, while the drunkards beat him and one drunkard jumped on top of him, astride his shoulders, and beat him with a bottle. After this many of the men left the lines and their places were taken by the drunkards who had been jeering and saying things in bad taste th rough the windows of the *Ayuntamiento.*

"I myself had felt much emotion at the shooting of the *guardia civil* by Pablo," Pilar said. "It was a thing of great ugliness, but I had thought if this is how it must be, this is how it must be, and at least there was no cruelty, only the depriving of life which, as we all have learned in these years, is a thing of ugliness but also a necessity to do if we are to win, and to preserve the Republic.

"When the square had been closed off and the lines formed, I had admired and understood it as a conception of Pablo, although it seemed to me to be somewhat fantastic and that it would be necessary for all that was to be done to be done in good taste if it were not to be repugnant. Certainly if the fascists were to be executed b the people, it was better for all the people to have a part in it, and I wished to share the guilt as much as any, just as I hoped to share in the benefits when the town should be ours. But after Don Guillermo I felt a feeling of shame and distaste, and with the coming of the drunkards and the worthless ones into the lines, and the abstention of those who left the lines as a protest after Don Guillermo, I wished that I might disassociate myself altogether from the lines, and I walked away, across the square, and sat down on a bench under one of the big trees that gave shade there.

"Two peasants from the lines walked over, talking together, and

one of them called to me, ‘What passes with thee, Pilar?’

‘”Nothing, man,’ I told him.

‘”Yes,’ he said. ‘Speak. What passes.’

‘”I think that I have a belly-full,’ I told him.

‘”Us, too,’ he said and they both sat down on the bench. One of them had a leather wineskin and he handed it to me.

“’Rinse out thy mouth,’ he said and the other said, going on with the talking they had been engaged in, ‘The worst is that it will bring bad luck. Nobody can tell me that such things as the killing of Don Guillermo in that fashion will not bring bad luck.’

“Then the other said, ‘If it is necessary to kill them all, and I am not convinced of that necessity, let them be killed decently and without mockery.’

“’Mockery is justified in the case of Don Faustino,’ the other said. ‘Since he was always a farcer and was never a serious man. But to mock such a serious man as Don Guillermo is beyond all right.’

“’I have a belly-full,’ I told him, and it was literally true because I felt an actual sickness in all of me inside and a sweating and a nausea as though I had swallowed bad sea food.

‘”Then, nothing,’ the one peasant said. ‘We will take no further part in it. But I wonder what happens in the other towns.’

‘”They have not repaired the telephone wires yet,’ I said. ‘It is a lack that should be remedied.’

“’Clearly,’ he said. ‘Who knows but what we might be better employed putting the town into a state of defense than massacring people with this slowness and brutality.’

“’I will go to speak with Pablo, I told them and I stood up from the bench and started toward the arcade that led to the door of the *Ayuntamiento* from where the lines spread across the square. The lines now were neither straight nor orderly and there was much and very grave drunkenness. Two men had fallen down and lay on their backs in the middle of the square and were passing a bottle back

and forth between them. One would take a drink and then shout, *'Viva La Anarquia!'* lying on his back and shouting as though he were a madman. He had a red-and-black handkerchief around his neck. The other shouted, *'Viva LaLibertad!'* and kicked his feet in the air and then bellowed, *'Viva La Libertad!'* again. He had a red-and-black handkerchief too ancl he waved it in one hand and waved the bottle with the other.

"A peasant who had left the lines and now stood in the shade of the arcade looked at them in disgust and said, 'They should shout, "Long live drunkenness." That's all they believe in.'

"'They don't believe even in that,' another peasant said. 'Those neither understand nor believe in anything.'

"Just then, one of the drunkards got to his feet and raised both arms with his fists clenched over his head and shouted, 'Long live Anarchy and Liberty and Iobscenity in the milk of the Republic!'

"The other drunkard who was still lying on his back, took hold of the ankle of the drunkard who was shouting and rolled over, so that the shouting drunkard fell with him, and they rolled over together and then sat up and the one who had pulled the other down put his arm around the shouter's neck and then handed the shouter a bottle and kissed the red-and-black handkerchief he wore and they both drank together.

"Just then, a yelling went up from the lines and, looking up the arcade, I could not see who it was that was coming out because the man's head did not show above the heads of those crowded about the door of the *Ayuntamiento.* All I could see was that some one was being pushed out by Pablo and Cuatro Dedas with their shotguns but I could not see who it was and I moved on close toward the lines where they were packed against the door to try to see.

"There was much pushing now and the chairs and the tables of the fascists' cafe had been overturned except for one table on which a drunkard was lying with his head hanging down and his mouth open and I picked up a chair and set it against one of the pillars and

mounted on it so that I could see over the heads of the crowd.

"The man who was being pushed out by Pablo and Cuatro Dedas was Don Anastasio Rivas, who was an undoubted fascist and the fattest man in the town. He was a grain buyer and the agent for several insurance companies and he also loaned money at high rates of interest. Standing on the chair, I saw him walk down the steps and toward the lines, his fat neck bulging over the back of the collar band of his shirt, and his bald head shining in the sun, but he never entered them because there was a shout, not as of different men shouting, but of all of them. It was an ugly noise and was the cry of the drunken lines all yelling together and the lines broke with the rush of men toward him and I saw Don Anastasio throw himself down with his hands over his head and then you could not see him for the men piled on top of him. And when the men got up from him, Don Anastasio was dead from his head being beaten against the stone flags of the paving of the arcade and there were no more lines but only a mob.

'"We're going in,' they commenced to shout. 'We're going in after them.'

"'He's too heavy to carry,' a man kicked at the body of Don Anastasio, who was lying there on his face. 'Let him stay there.'

"'Why should we lug that tub of tripe to the cliff? Let him lie there.'

'"We are going to enter and finish with them inside,' a man shouted. 'We're going in.'

'"Why wait all day in the sun?' another yelled. 'Come on. Let us go.'

"The mob was now pressing into the arcade. They were shouting and pushing and they made a noise now like an animal and they were all shouting 'Open up! Open up!' for the guards had shut the doors of the *Ayuntamiento* when the lines broke.

"Standing on the chair, I could see in through the barred window into the hall of the *Ayuntamiento* and in there it was as it

had been before. The priest was standing, and those who were left were kneeling in a half circle around him and they were all praying. Pablo was sitting on the big table in front of the Mayor's chair with his shotgun slung over his back. His legs were hanging down from the table and he was rolling a cigarette. Cuatro Dedas was sitting in the Mayor's chair with his feet on the table and he was smoking a cigarette. All the guards were sitting in different chairs of the administration, holding their guns. The key to the big door was on the table beside Pablo.

"The mob was shouting, 'Open up! Open up! Open up!' as though it were a chant and Pablo was sitting there as though he did not hear them. He said something to the priest but I could not hear what he said for the noise of the mob.

"The priest, as before, did not answer him but kept on praying. With many people pushing me, I moved the chair close against the wall, shoving it ahead of me as they shoved me from behind. I stood on the chair with my face close against the bars of the window and held on by the bars. A man climbed on the chair too and stood with his arms around mine, holding the wider bars.

"'The chair will break,' I said to him.

''What does it matter?' he said. 'Look at them. Look at them pray.'

"His breath on my neck smelled like the smell of the mob, sour, like vomit on paving stones and the smell of drunkenness, and then he put his mouth against the opening in the bars with his head over my shoulder, and shouted, 'Open up! Open!' and it was as though the mob were on my back as a devil is on your back in a dream.

"Now the mob was pressed tight against the door so that those in front were being crushed by all the others who were pressing and from the square a big drunkard in a black smock with a redand-black handkerchief around his neck, ran and threw himself against the press of the mob and fell forward onto the pressing men and then stood up and backed away and then ran forward again and

threw himself against the backs of those men who were pushing, shouting, 'Long live me and long live Anarchy.'

"As I watched, this man turned away from the crowd and went and sat down and drank from a bottle and then, while he was sitting down, he saw Don Anastasio, who was still lying face down on the stones, but much trampled now, and the drunkard got up and went over to Don Anastasio and leaned over and poured out of the bottle onto the head of Don Anastasio and onto his clothes, and then he took a matchbox out of his pocket and lit several matches, trying to make a fire with Don Anastasio. But the wind was blowing hard now and it blew the matches out and after a little the big drunkard sat there by Don Anastasio, shaking his head and drinking out of the bottle and every once in a while, leaning over and patting Don Anastasio on the shoulders of his dead body.

"All this time the mob was shouting to open up and the man on the chair with me was holding tight to the bars of the window and shouting to open up until it deafened me with his voice roaring past my ear and his breath foul on me and I looked away from watching the drunkard who had been trying to set fire to Don Anastasio and into the hall of the *Ayuntamiento* again; and it was just as it had been. They were still praying as they had been, the men all kneeling, with their shirts open, some with their heads down, others with their heads up, looking toward the priest and toward the crucifix that he held, and the priest praying fast and hard and looking out over their heads, and in back of them Pablo, with his cigarette now lighted, was sitting there on the table swinging his legs, his shotgun slung over his back, and he was playing with the key.

"I saw Pablo speak to the priest again, leaning forward from the table and I could not hear what he said for the shouting. But the priest did not answer him but went on praying. Then a man stood up from among the half circle of those who were praying and I saw he wanted to go out. It was Don José Castro, whom every one

called Don Pepe, a confirmed fascist, and a dealer in horses, and he stood up now small, neat-looking even unshaven and wearing a pajama top tucked into a pair of gray-striped trousers. He kissed the crucifix and the priest blessed him and he stood up and looked at Pablo and jerked his head toward the door.

"Pablo shook his head and went on smoking. I could see Don Pepe say something to Pablo but could not hear it. Pablo did not answer; he simply shook his head again and nodded toward the door.

"Then I saw Don Pepe look full at the door and realized that he had not known it was locked. Pablo showed him the key and he stood looking at it an instant and then he turned and went and knelt down again. I saw the priest look around at Pablo and Pablo grinned at him and showed him the key and the priest seemed to realize for the first time that the door was locked and he seemed as though he started to shake his head, but he only inclined it and went back to praying.

"I do not know how they could not have understood the door was locked unless it was that they were so concentrated on their praying and their own thoughts; but now they certainly understood and they understood the shouting and they must have known now that all was changed. But they remained the same as before.

"By now the shouting was so that you could hear nothing and the drunkard who stood on the chair with me shook with his hands at the bars and yelled, 'Open up! Open up!' until he was hoarse.

"I watched Pablo speak to the priest again and the priest did not answer. Then I saw Pablo unsling his shotgun and he reached over and tapped the priest on the shoulder with it. The priest paid no attention to him and I saw Pablo shake his head. Then he spoke over his shoulder to Cuatro Dedos and Cuatro Dedos spoke to the other guards and they all stood up and walked back to the far end of the room and stood there with their shotguns.

"I saw Pablo say something to Cuatro Dedos and he moved over

two tables and some benches and the guards stood behind them with their shotguns. It made a barricade in that corner of the room. Pablo leaned over and tapped the priest on the shoulder again with the shotgun and the priest did not pay attention to him but I saw Don Pepe watching him while the others paid no attention but went on praying. Pablo shook his head and, seeing Don Pepe looking at him, he shook his head at Don Pepe and showed him the key, holding it up in his hand. Don Pepe understood and he dropped his head and commenced to pray very fast.

"Pablo swung his legs down from the table and walked around it to the big chair of the Mayor on the raised platform behind the long council table. He sat down in it and rolled himself a cigarette, all the time watching the fascists who were praying with the priest. You could not see any expression on his face at all. The key was on the table in front of him. It was a big key of iron, over a foot long. Then Pablo called to the guards something I could not hear and one guard went down to the door. I could see them all praying faster than ever and I knew that they all knew now.

"Pablo said something to the priest but the priest did not answer. Then Pablo leaned forward, picked up the key and tossed it underhand to the guard at the door. The guard caught it and Pablo smiled at him. Then the guard put the key in the door, turned it, and pulled the door toward him, ducking behind it as the mob rushed in.

"I saw them come in and just then the drunkard on the chair with me commenced to shout 'Ayee! Ayee! Ayee!' and pushed his head forward so I could not see and then he shouted 'Kill them! Kill them! Club them! Kill them!' and he pushed me aside with his two arms and I could see nothing.

"I hit my elbow into his belly and I said, 'Drunkard, whose chair is this? Let me see.'

"But he just kept shaking his hands and arms against the bars and shouting, 'Kill them! Club them! Club them! that's it. Club

them! Kill them! *Cabrones! Cabrones! Cabronesl'*

"I hit him hard with my elbow and said, *'Cabron!* Drunkard! Let me see.'

"Then he put both his hands on my head to push me down and so he might see better and leaned all his weight on my head and went on shouting, 'Club them! that's it. Club them!'

"'Club yourself,' I said and I hit him hard where it would hurt him and it hurt him and he dropped his hands from my head and grabbed himself and said. *'No hay derecho, mujer.* This, woman, you have no right to do.' And in that moment, looking through the bars, I saw the hall full of men flailing away with clubs and striking with flails, and poking and striking and pushing and heaving against people with the white wooden pitchforks that now were red and with their tines broken, and this was going on all over the room while Pablo sat in the big chair with his shotgun on his knees, watching, and they were shouting and clubbing and stabbing and men were screaming as horses scream in a fire. And I saw the priest with his skirts tucked up scrambling over a bench and those after him were chopping at him with the sickles and the reaping hooks and then some one had hold of his robe and there was another scream and another scream and I saw two men chopping into his back with sickles while a third man held the skirt of his robe and the priest's arms were up and he was clinging to the back of a chair and then the chair I was standing on broke and the drunkard and I were on the pavement that smelled of spilled wine and vomit and the drunkard was shaking his finger at me and saying, *'No hay derecho, mujer, no hay derecho.* You could have done me an injury,' and the people were trampling over us to get into the hall of the *Ayuntamiento* and all I could see was legs of people going in the doorway and the drunkard sitting there facing me and holding himself where I had hit him.

"That was the end of the killing of the fascists in our town and I was glad I did not see more of it and, but for that drunkard, I would

have seen it all. So he served some good because in the *Ayuntamiento* it was a thing one is sorry to have seen.

"But the other drunkard was something rarer still. As we got up after the breaking of the chair, and the people were still crowding into the *Ayuntamiento,* I saw this drunkard of the square with his red-and-black scarf, again pouring something over Don Anastasio. He was shaking his head from side to side and it was very hard for him to sit up, but he was pouring and lighting matches and then pouring and lighting matches and I walked over to him and said, 'What are you doing, shameless?'

" 'Nada, mujer, nada,' he said. 'Let me alone.'

"And perhaps because I was standing there so that my legs made a shelter from the wind, the match caught and a blue flame began to run up the shoulder of the coat of Don Anastasio and onto the back of his neck and the drunkard put his head up and shouted in a huge voice, 'They're burning the dead! They're burning the dead'

'"Who?' somebody said.

'"Where?' shouted some one else.

"'Here,' bellowed the drunkard. 'Exactly here!'

"Then some one hit the drunkard a great blow alongside the head with a flail and he fell back, and lying on the ground, he looked up at the man who had hit him and then shut his eyes and crossed his hands on his chest, and lay there beside Don Anastasio as though he were asleep. The man did not hit him again and he lay there and he was still there when they picked up Don Anastasio and put him with the others in the cart that hauled them all over to the cliff where they were thrown over that evening with the others after there had been a cleaning up in the *Ayuntamiento.* It would have been better for the town if they had thrown over twenty or thirty of the drunkards, especially those of the red-andblack scarves, and if we ever have another revolution I believe they should be destroyed at the start. But then we did not know this. But in the next days we were to learn.

“But that night we did not know what was to come. After the slaying in the *Ayuntamiento* there was no more killing but we could not have a meeting that night because there were too many drunkards. It was impossible to obtain order and so the meeting was postponed until the next day.

“That night I slept with Pablo. I should not say this to you, *guapa,* but on the other hand, it is good for you to know everything and at least what I tell you is true. Listen to this, *Inglés.* It is very curious.

“As I say, that night we ate and it was very curious. It was as after a storm or a flood or a battle and everyone was tired and no one spoke much. I, myself, felt hollow and not well and I was full of shame and a sense of wrongdoing and I had a great feeling of oppression and of bad to come, as this morning after the planes. And certainly, bad came within three days.

“Pablo, when we ate, spoke little.

“’Did you like it, Pilar?’ he asked finally with his mouth full of roast young goat. We were eating at the inn from where the busses leave and the room was crowded and people were singing and there was difficulty serving.

“’No,’ I said. ‘Except for Don Faustino, I did not like it.’

“’I liked it,’ he said.

“’All of it?’ I asked him.

“’All of it,’ he said and cut himself a big piece of bread with his knife and commenced to mop up gravy with it. ‘All of it, except the priest.’

“’You didn’t like it about the priest?’ because I knew he hated priests even worse than he hated fascists.

‘”He was a disillusionment to me,’ Pablo said sadly.

“So many people were singing that we had to almost shout to hear one another.

‘”Why?’

“’He died very badly,’ Pablo said. ‘He had very little dignity.’

“’How did you want him to have dignity when he was being chased by the mob?’ I said. ‘I thought he had much dignity all the time before. All the dignity that one could have.’

“’Yes,’ Pablo said. ‘But in the last minute he was frightened.’

“’Who wouldn’t be?’ I said. ‘Did you see what they were chasing him with?’

‘”Why would I not see?’ Pablo said. ‘But I find he died badly.’

“’In such circumstances anyone dies badly,’ I told him. ‘What do you want for your money? Everything that happened in the *Ayuntamiento* was scabrous.’

‘”Yes,’ said Pablo. ‘There was little organization. But a priest. He has an example to set.’

“’I thought you hated priests.’

“’Yes,’ said Pablo and cut some more bread. ‘But a *Spanish* priest. A *Spanish* priest should die very well.’

“’I think he died well enough,’ I said. ‘Being deprived of all formality.’

“’No,’ Pablo said. ‘To me he was a great disillusionment. All day I had waited for the death of the priest. I had thought he would be the last to enter the lines. I awaited it with great anticipation. I expected something of a culmination. I had never seen a priest die.’

“’There is time,’ I said to him sarcastically. ‘Only today did the movement start.’

“’No,’ he said. ‘I am disillusioned.’

“’Now,’ I said. ‘I suppose you will lose your faith.’

“’You do not understand, Pilar,’ he said. ‘He was a *Spanish* priest.’

“’What people the Spaniards are,’ I said to him. And what a people they are for pride, eh, *Inglés?* What a people.”

“We must get on,” Robert Jordan said. He looked at the sun.

“It’s nearly noon.”

“Yes,” Pilar said. “We will go now. But let me tell you about Pablo. That night he said to me, ‘Pilar, tonight we will do nothing.’

‘”Good,’ I told him. ‘That pleases me.’

“’I think it would be bad taste after the killing of so many people.’

“’Qué va’, I told him. ‘What a saint you are. You think I lived years with bullfighters not to know how they are after the Corr ida r ‘

‘”Is it true, Pilar *r’* he asked me.

“’When did I lie to *your’* I told him.

“’It is true, Pilar, I am a finished man this night. You do not reproach *mer’*

“’No, *hombre,’* I said to him. ‘But don’t kill people every day, Pablo.’

“And he slept that night like a baby and I woke him in the morning at daylight but I could not sleep that night and I got up and sat in a chair and looked out of the window and I could see the square in the moonlight where the lines had been and across the square the trees shining in the moonlight, and the darkness of their shadows, and the benches bright too in the moonlight, and the scattered bottles shining, and beyond the edge of the cliff where they had all been thrown. And there was no sound but the splashing of the water in the fountain and I sat there and I thought we have begun badly.

“The window was open and up the square from the Fonda I could hear a woman crying. I went out on the balcony standing there in my bare feet on the iron and the moon shone on the faces of all the buildings of the square and the crying was coming from the balcony of the house of Don Guillermo. It was his wife and she was on the balcony kneeling and crying.

“Then I went back inside the room and I sat there and I did not wish to think for that was the worst day of my life until one other day.”

“What was the other?” Maria asked.

“Three days later when the fascists took the town.”

“Do not tell me about it,” said Maria. “I do not want to hear it. This is enough. This was too much.”

“I told you that you should not have listened,” Pilar said. “See. I did not want you to hear it. Now you will have bad dreams.”

“No,” said Maria. “But I do not want to hear more.”

“I wish you would tell me of it sometime,” Robert Jordan said.

“I will,” Pilar said. “But it is bad for Maria.”

“I don’t want to hear it,” Maria said pitifully. “Please, Pilar. And do not tell it if I am there, for I might listen in spite of myself.”

Her lips were working and Robert Jordan thought she would cry.

“Please, Pilar, do not tell it.”

“Do not worry, little cropped head,” Pilar said. “Do not worry. But I will tell the *Inglés* sometime.”

“But I want to be there when he is there,” Maria said. “Oh, Pilar, do not tell it at all.”

“I will tell it when thou art working.”

“No. No. Please. Let us not tell it at all,” Maria said.

“It is only fair to tell it since I have told what we did,” Pilar said. “But you shall never hear it.”

“Are there no pleasant things to speak of?” Maria said. “Do we have to talk always of horrors?”

“This afternoon,” Pilar said, “thou and *Inglés.* The two of you can speak of what you wish.”

“Then that the afternoon should come,” Maria said. “That it should come flying.”

“It will come,” Pilar told her. “It will come flying and go the same way and tomorrow will fly, too.”

“This afternoon,” Maria said. “This afternoon. That this afternoon should come.”

Chapter Eleven

As they came up, still deep in the shadow of the pines, after dropping down from the high meadow into the wooden valley and climbing up it on a trail that paralleled the stream and then left it to gain, steeply, the top of a rim-rock formation, a man with a carbine stepped out from behind a tree.

"Halt," he said. Then, *"Hola,* Pilar. Who is this with thee?"

"An *Inglés,"* Pilar said. "But with a Christian name-Roberto. And what an obscenity of steepness it is to arrive here."

"Salud, Camarada," the guard said to Robert Jordan and put out his hand. "Are you well?"

"Yes," said Robert Jordan. "And thee?"

"Equally," the guard said. He was very young, with a light build, thin, rather hawk-nosed face, high cheekbones and gray eyes. He wore no hat, his hair was black and shaggy and his handclasp was strong and friendly. His eyes were friendly too.

"Hello, Maria," he said to the girl. "You did not tire yourself?"

"Qué va, Joaquín ," the girl said. "We have sat and talked more than we have walked."

"Are you the dynamiter?" Joaquín asked. "We have heard you were here."

"We passed the night at Pablo's," Robert Jordan said. "Yes, I am the dynamiter."

"We are glad to see you," Joaquín said. "Is it for a train?"

"Were you at the last train?" Robert Jordan asked and smiled.

"Was I not," Joaquín said. "That's where we got this," he grinned at Maria. "You are pretty now," he said to Maria. "Have

they told thee how pretty?"

"Shut up, Joaquín , and thank you very much," Maria said. "You'd be pretty with a haircut."

"I carried thee," Joaquín told the girl. "I carried thee over my shoulder."

"As did many others," Pilar said in the deep voice. "Who didn't carry her? Where is the old man?"

"At the camp."

"Where was he last night?"

"In Segovia."

"Did he bring news?"

"Yes," Joaquín said, "there is news."

"Good or bad?"

"I believe bad."

"Did you see the planes?"

"Ay," said Joaquín and shook his head. "Don't talk to me of that. Comrade Dynamiter, what planes were those?"

"Heinkel one eleven bombers. Heinkel and Fiat pursuit," Robert Jordan told him.

"What were the big ones with the low wings?"

"Heinkel one elevens."

"By any names they are as bad," [oaquin said. "But I am delaying you. I will take you to the commander."

"The commander?" Pilar asked.

Joaquín nodded seriously. "I like it better than 'chief'," he said. "It is more military."

"You are militarizing heavily," Pilar said and laughed at him.

"No," Joaquín said. "But I like military terms because it makes orders clearer and for better discipline."

"Here is one according to thy taste, *Inglés,"* Pilar said. "A very serious boy."

"Should I carry thee?" Joaquín asked the girl and put his arm on her shoulder and smiled in her face.

“Once was enough,” Maria told him. “Thank you just the same.”

“Can you remember it?” Joaquín asked her.

“I can remember being carried,” Maria said. “By you, no. I remember the gypsy because he dropped me so many times. But I thank thee, Joaquín , and I’ll carry thee sometime.”

“I can remember it well enough,” Joaquín said. “I can remember holding thy two legs and thy belly was on my shoulder and thy head over my back and thy arms hanging down against my back.”

“Thou hast much memory,” Maria said and smiled at him. “I remember nothing of that. Neither thy arms nor thy shoulders nor thy back.”

“Do you want to know something?” Joaquín asked her.

“What is it?”

“I was glad thou wert hanging over my back when the shots were coming from behind us.”

“What a swine,” Maria said. “And was it for this the gypsy too carried me so much?”

“For that and to hold onto thy legs.”

“My heroes,” Maria said. “My saviors.”

“Listen, *guapa,”* Pilar told her. “This boy carried thee much, and in that moment thy legs said nothing to anyone. In that moment only the bullets talked clearly. And if he would have dropped thee he could soon have been out of range of the bullets.”

“I have thanked him,” Maria said. “And I will carry him sometime. Allow us to joke. I do not have to cry, do I, because he carried me?”

“I’d have dropped thee,” Joaquín went on teasing her. “But I was afraid Pilar would shoot me.”

“I shoot no one,” Pilar said.

“No hace falta,” Joaquín told her. “You don’t need to. You scare them to death with your mouth.”

“What a way to speak,” Pilar told him. “And you used to be such a polite little boy. What did you do before the movement, little

boy?"

"Very little," Joaquín said. "I was sixteen."

"But what, exactly?"

"A few pairs of shoes from time to time."

"Make them?"

"No. Shine them."

"Qué va," said Pilar. "There is more to it than that." She looked at his brown face, his lithe build, his shock of hair, and the quick heel-and-toe way that he walked. "Why did you fail at it?"

"Fail at what?"

"What? You know what. You're growing the pigtail now."

"I guess it was fear," the boy said.

"You've a nice figure," Pilar told him. "But the face isn't much. So it was fear, was it? You were all right at the train."

"I have no fear of them now," the boy said. "None. And we have seen much worse things and more dangerous than the bulls. It is clear no bull is as dangerous as a machine gun. But if I were in the ring with one now I do not know ifI could dominate my legs."

"He wanted to be a bullfighter," Pilar explained to Robert Jordan. "But he was afraid."

"Do you like the bulls, Comrade Dynamiter?" Joaquín grinned, showing white teeth.

"Very much," Robert Jordan said. "Very, very much."

"Have you seen them in Valladolid?" asked Joaquín .

"Yes. In September at the feria."

"That's my town," Joaquín said. "What a fine town but how the buena gente, the good people of that town, have suffered in this war." Then, his face grave, "There they shot my father. My mother. My brother-in-law and now my sister."

"What barbarians," Robert Jordan said.

How many times had he heard this? How many times had he watched people say it with difficulty? How many times had he seen their eyes fill and their throats harden with the difficulty of saying

my father, or my brother, or my mother, or my sister? He could not remember how many times he had heard them mention their dead in this way. Nearly always they spoke as this boy did now; suddenly and apropos of the mention of the town and always you said, “What barbarians.”

You only heard the statement of the loss. You did not see the father fall as Pilar made him see the fascists die in that story she had told by the stream. You knew the father died in some courtyard, or against some wall, or in some field or orchard, or at night, in the lights of a truck, beside some road. You had seen the lights of the car from the hills and heard the shooting and afterwards you had come down to the road and found the bodies. You did not see the mother shot, nor the sister, nor the brother. You heard about it; you heard the shots; and you saw the bodies.

Pilar had made him see it in that town.

If that woman could only write. He would try to write it and if he had luck and could remember it perhaps he could get it down as she told it. God, how she could tell a story. She’s better than Quevedo, he thought. He never wrote the death of any Don Faustino as well as she told it. I wish I could write well enough to write that story, he thought. What we did. Not what the others did to us. He knew enough about that. He knew plenty about that behind the lines. But you had to have known the people before. You had to know what they had been in the village.

Because of our mobility and because we did not have to stay afterwards to take the punishment we never knew how anything really ended, he thought. You stayed with a peasant and his family. You came at night and ate with them. In the day you were hidden and the next night you were gone. You did your job and cleared out. The next time you came that way you heard that they had been shot. It was as simple as that.

But you were always gone when it happened. The *partizans* did their damage and pulled out. The peasants stayed and took the

punishment. I've always known about the other, he thought. What we did to them at the start. I've always known it and hated it and I have heard it mentioned shamelessly and shamefully, bragged of, boasted of, defended, explained and denied. But that damned woman made me see it as though I had been there.

Well, he thought, it is part of one's education. It will be quite an education when it's finished. You learn in this war if you listen. You most certainly did. He was lucky that he had lived parts of ten years in Spain before the war. They trusted you on the language, principally. They trusted you on understanding the language completely and speaking it idiomatically and having a knowledge of the different places. A Spaniard was only really loyal to his village in the end. First Spain of course, then his own tribe, then his province, then his village, his family and finally his trade. If you knew Spanish he was prejudiced in your favor, if you knew his province it was that much better, but if you knew his village and his trade you were in as far as any foreigner ever could be. He never felt like a foreigner in Spanish and they did not really treat him like a foreigner most of the time; only when they turned on you.

Of course they turned on you. They turned on you often but they always turned on everyone. They turned on themselves, too. If you had three together, two would unite against one, and then the two would start to betray each other. Not always, but often enough for you to take enough cases and start to draw it as a conclusion.

This was no way to think; but who censored his thinking? Nobody but himself. He would not think himself into any defeatism. The first thing was to win the war. If we did not win the war everything was lost. But he noticed, and listened to, and remembered everything. He was serving in a war and he gave absolute loyalty and as complete a performance as he could give while he was serving. But nobody owned his mind, nor his faculties for seeing and hearing, and if he were going to form judgments he would form them afterwards. And there would be plenty of material

to draw them from. There was plenty already. There was a little too much sometimes.

Look at the Pilar woman, he thought. No matter what comes, if there is time, I must make her tell me the rest of that story. Look at her walking along with those two kids. You could not get three better-looking products of Spain than those. She is like a mountain and the boy and the girl are like young trees. The old trees are all cut down and the young trees are growing clean like that. In spite of what has happened to the two of them they look as fresh and clean and new and untouched as though they had never heard of misfortune. But according to Pilar, Maria has just gotten sound again. She must have been in an awful shape.

He remembered a Belgian boy in the Eleventh Brigade who had enlisted with five other boys from his village. It was a village of about two hundred people and the boy had never been away from the village before. When he first saw the boy, out at Hans' Brigade Staff, the other five from the village had all been killed and the boy was in very bad shape and they were using him as an orderly to wait on table at the staff. He had a big, blond, ruddy Flemish face and huge awkward peasant hands and he moved, with the dishes, as powerfully and awkwardly as a draft horse. But he cried all the time. All during the meal he cried with no noise at all.

You looked up and there he was, crying. If you asked for the wine, he cried and if you passed your plate for stew, he cried; turning away his head. Then he would stop; but if you looked up at him, tears would start coming again. Between courses he cried in the kitchen. Everyone was very gentle with him. But it did no good. He would have to find out what became of him and whether he ever cleared up and was fit for soldiering again.

Maria was sound enough now. She seemed so anyway. But he was no psychiatrist. Pilar was the psychiatrist. It probably had been good for them to have been together last night. Yes, unless it stopped. It certainly had been good for him. He felt fine today;

sound and good and unworried and happy. The show looked bad enough but he was awfully lucky, too. He had been in others that announced themselves badly. Announced themselves; that was thinking in Spanish. Maria was lovely.

Look at her, he said to himself. Look at her.

He looked at her striding happily in the sun; her khaki shirt open at the neck. She walks like a colt moves, he thought. You do not run onto something like that. Such things don't happen. Maybe it never did happen, he thought. Maybe you dreamed it or made it up and it never did happen. Maybe it is like the dreams you have when some one you have seen in the cinema comes to your bed at night and is so kind and lovely. He'd slept with them all that way when he was asleep in bed. He could remember Garbo still, and Harlow. Yes, Harlow many times. Maybe it was like those dreams.

But he could still remember the time Garbo came to his bed the night before the attack at Pozoblanco and she was wearing a soft silky wool sweater when he put his arm around her and when she leaned forward her hair swept forward and over his face and she said why had he never told her that he loved her when she had loved him all this time? She was not shy, nor cold, nor distant. She was just lovely to hold and kind and lovely and like the old days with Jack Gilbert and it was as true as though it happened and he loved her much more than Harlow though Garbo was only there once while Harlow—maybe this was like those dreams.

Maybe it isn't too, he said to himself. Maybe I could reach over and touch that Maria now, he said to himself. Maybe you are afraid to he said to himself. Maybe you would find out that it never happened and it was not true and it was something you made up like those dreams about the people of the cinema or how all your old girls come back and sleep in that robe at night on all the bare floors, in the straw of the haybarns, the stables, the *corrales* and the *cortijos,* the woods, the garages, the trucks and all the hills of Spain. They all came to that robe when he was asleep and they were all

much nicer than they ever had been in life. Maybe it was like that. Maybe you would be afraid to touch her to see if it was true. Maybe you would, and probably it is something that you made up or that you dreamed.

He took a step across the trail and put his hand on the girl's arm. Under his fingers he felt the smoothness of her arm in the worn khaki. She looked at him and smiled.

"Hello, Maria," he said.

"Hello, *Inglés,"* she answered and he saw her tawny brown face and the yellow-gray eyes and the full lips smiling and the cropped sun-burned hair and she lifted her face at him and smiled in his eyes. It was true all right.

Now they were in sight of El Sordo's camp in the last of the pines, where there was a rounded gulch-head shaped like an upturned basin. All these limestone upper basins must be full of caves, he thought. There are two caves there ahead. The scrub pines growing in the rock hide them well. This is as good or a better place than Pablo's.

"How was this shooting of thy family?" Pilar was saying to Joaquín .

"Nothing, woman," Joaquín said. "They were of the left as many others in Valladolid. When the fascists purified the town they shot first the father. He had voted Socialist. Then they shot the mother. She had voted the same. It was the first time she had ever voted. After that they shot the husband of one of the sisters. He was a member of the syndicate of tramway drivers. Clearly he could not drive a tram without belonging to the syndicate. But he was without politics. I knew him well. He was even a little bit shameless. I do not think he was even a good comrade. Then the husband of the other girl, the other sister, who was also in the trams, had gone to the hills as I had. They thought she knew where he was. But she did not. So they shot her because she would not tell them where he was."

“What barbarians,” said Pilar. “Where is El Sordo? I do not see him. “

“He is here. He is probably inside,” answered Joaquín and stopping now, and resting the rifle butt on the ground, said, “Pilar, listen to me. And thou, Maria. Forgive me if I have molested you speaking of things of the family. I know that all have the same troubles and it is more valuable not to speak of them.”

“That you should speak,” Pilar said. “For what are we born if not to aid one another? And to listen and say nothing is a cold enough aid.”

“But it can molest the Maria. She has too many things of her own.”

“Qué va,” Maria said. “Mine are such a big bucket that yours falling in will never fill it. I am sorry, Joaquín , and I hope thy sister is well.”

“So far she’s all right,” Joaquín said. “They have her in prison and it seems they do not mistreat her much.”

“Are there others in the family?” Robert Jordan asked.

“No,” the boy said. “Me. Nothing more. Except the brother-inlaw who went to the hills and I think he is dead.”

“Maybe he is all right,” Maria said. “Maybe he is with a band in other mountains.”

“For me he is dead,” Joaquín said. “He was never too good at getting about and he was conductor of a tram and that is not the best preparation for the hills. I doubt if he could last a year. He was somewhat weak in the chest too.”

“But he may be all right,” Maria put her arm on his shoulder.

“Certainly, girl. Why not?” said Joaquín .

As the boy stood there, Maria reached up, put her arms around his neck and kissed him. Joaquín turned his head away because he was crying.

“That is as a brother,” Maria said to him. “I kiss thee as a brother.”

The boy shook his head, crying without making any noise.

"I am thy sister," Maria said. "And I love thee and thou hast a family. We are all thy family."

"Including the *Inglés,"* boomed Pilar. "Isn't it true, *Inglés?"*

"Yes," Robert Jordan said to the boy, "we are all thy family, Joaquín ."

"He's your brother," Pilar said. "Hey *Inglés?"*

Robert Jordan put his arm around the boy's shoulder. "We are all brothers," he said. The boy shook his head.

"I am ashamed to have spoken," he said. "To speak of such things makes it more difficult for all. I am ashamed of molesting you."

"I obscenity in the milk of my shame," Pilar said in her deep lovely voice. "And if the Maria kisses thee again I will commence kissing thee myself. It's years since I've kissed a bullfighter, even an unsuccessful one like thee, I would like to kiss an unsuccessful bullfighter turned Communist. Hold him, *Inglés,* till I get a good kiss at him."

"Deja," the boy said and turned away sharply. "Leave me alone. I am all right and I am ashamed."

He stood there, getting his face under control. Maria put her hand in Robert Jordan's. Pilar stood with her hands on her hips looking at the boy mockingly now.

"When I kiss thee," she said to him, "it will not be as any sister. This trick of kissing as a sister."

"It is not necessary to joke," the boy said. "I told you I am all right, I am sorry that I spoke."

"Well then let us go and see the old man," Pilar said. "I tire myself with such emotion."

The boy looked at her. From his eyes you could see he was suddenly very hurt.

"Not thy emotion," Pilar said to him. "Mine. What a tender thing thou art for a bullfighter."

“I was a failure,” Joaquín said. “You don’t have to keep insisting on it.”

“But you are growing the pigtail another time.”

“Yes, and why not? Fighting stock serves best for that purpose economically. It gives employment to many and the State will control it. And perhaps now I would not be afraid.”

“Perhaps not,” Pilar said. “Perhaps not.”

“Why do you speak in such a brutal manner, Pilar?” Maria said to her. “I love thee very much but thou art acting very barbarous.”

“It is possible that I am barbarous,” Pilar said. “Listen, *Inglés.* Do you know what you are going to say to El Sordo?”

“Yes.”

“Because he is a man of few words unlike me and thee and this sentimental menagerie.”

“Why do you talk thus?” Maria asked again, angrily.

“I don’t know,” said Pilar as she strode along. “Why do you think?”

“I do not know.”

“At times many things tire me,” Pilar said angrily. “You understand? And one of them is to have forty-eight years. You hear me? Forty-eight years and an ugly face. And another is to see panic in the face of a failed bullfighter of Communist tendencies when I say, as a joke, I might kiss him.”

“It’s not true, Pilar,” the boy said. “You did not see that.”

“Qué va, it’s not true. And I obscenity in the milk of all of you. Ah, there he is. *Hola,* Santiago! *Qué tal?”*

The man to whom Pilar spoke was short and heavy, brown-faced, with broad cheekbones; gray haired, with wide-set yellow-brown eyes, a thin-bridged, hooked nose like an Indian’s, a long upper lip and a wide, thin mouth. He was clean shaven and he walked toward them from the mouth of the cave, moving with the bow-legged walk that went with his cattle herdsman’s breeches and boots. The day was warm but he had on a sheep’s-wool-lined short

leather jacket buttoned up to the neck. He put out a big brown hand to Pilar. *"Hola,* woman," he said. *"Hola,"* he said to Robert Jordan and shook his hand and looked him keenly in the face. Robert Jordan saw his eyes were yellow as a eat's and Rat as reptile's eyes are. *"Guapa,"* he said to Maria and patted her shoulder.

"Eaten?" he asked Pilar. She shook her head.

"Eat," he said and looked at Robert Jordan. "Drink?" he asked, making a motion with his hand decanting his thumb downward.

"Yes, thanks."

"Good," El Sordo said. "Whiskey?"

"You have whiskey?"

El Sordo nodded. *"Inglés?"* he asked. "Not *Ruso?"*

"Americano. "

"Few Americans here," he said.

"Now more."

"Less bad. North or South?"

"North."

"Same as *Inglés.* When blow bridge?"

"You know about the bridge?"

El Sordo nodded.

"Day after tomorrow morning."

"Good," said El Sordo.

"Pablo?" he asked Pilar.

She shook her head. El Sordo grinned.

"Go away," he said to Maria and grinned again. "Come back," he looked at a large watch he pulled out on a leather thong from inside his coat. "Half an hour."

He motioned to them to sit down on a flattened log that served as a bench and looking at Joaquín , jerked his thumb down the trail in the direction they had come from.

"I'll walk down with Joaquín and come back," Maria said.

El Sordo went into the cave and came out with a pinch bottle of Scotch whiskey and three glasses. The bottle was under one arm,

and three glasses were in the hand of that arm, a finger in each glass, and his other hand was around the neck of an earthenware jar of water. He put the glasses and the bottle down on the log and set the jug on the ground.

"No ice," he said to Robert Jordan and handed him the bottle.

"I don't want any," Pilar said and covered her glass with her hand.

"Ice last night on ground," El Sordo said and grinned. "All melt. Ice up there," El Sordo said and pointed to the snow that showed on the bare crest of the mountains. "Too far."

Robert Jordan started to pour into El Sordo's glass but the deaf man shook his head and made a motion for the other to pour for himself.

Robert Jordan poured a big drink of Scotch into the glass and El Sordo watched him eagerly and when he had finished, handed him the water jug and Robert Jordan filled the glass with the cold water that ran in a stream from the earthenware spout as he tipped up the jug.

El Sordo poured himself half a glassful of whiskey and filled the glass with water.

"Wine?" he asked Pilar.

"No. Water."

"Take it," he said. "No good," he said to Robert Jordan and grinned. "Knew many English. Always much whiskey."

"Where?"

"Ranch," El Sordo said. "Friends of boss."

"Where do you get the whiskey?"

"What?" he could not hear.

"You have to shout," Pilar said. "Into the other ear."

El Sordo pointed to his better ear and grinned.

"Where do you get the whiskey?" Robert Jordan shouted.

"Make it," El Sordo said and watched Robert Jordan's hand check on its way to his mouth with the glass.

“No,” El Sordo said and patted his shoulder. “Joke. Comes from La Granja. Heard last night comes English dynamiter. Good. Very happy. Get whiskey. For you. You like?”

“Very much,” said Robert Jordan. “It’s very good whiskey.”

“Am contented,” Sordo grinned. “Was bringing tonight with information.”

“What information?”

“Much troop movement.”

“Where?”

“Segovia. Planes you saw.”

“Yes.”

“Bad, eh?”

“Bad.”

“Troop movement?”

“Much between Villacastin and Segovia. On Valladolid road. Much between Villacastfn and San Rafael. Much. Much.”

“What do you think?”

“We prepare something?”

“Possibly.”

“They know. Prepare too.”

“It is possible.”

“Why not blow bridge tonight?”

“Orders.”

“Whose orders?”

“General Staff.”

“So.”

“Is the time of the blowing important?” Pilar asked.

“Of all importance.”

“But if they are moving up troops?”

“I will send Anselmo with a report of all movement and concentrations. He is checking the road.”

“You have some one at road?” Sordo asked.

Robert Jordan did not know how much he had heard. You never

know with a deaf man.

"Yes," he said.

"Me, too. Why not blow bridge now?"

"I have my orders."

"I don't like it," El Sordo said. "This I do not like."

"Nor I," said Robert Jordan.

El Sordo shook his head and took a sip of the whiskey. "You want of me?"

"How many men have you?"

"Eight."

"To cut the telephone, attack the post at the house of the roadmenders, take it, and fall back on the bridge."

"I t is easy."

"It will all be written out."

"Don't trouble. And Pablo?"

"Will cut the telephone below, attack the post at the sawmill, take it and fall back on the bridge."

"And afterwards for the retreat?" Pilar asked. "We are seven men, two women and five horses. You are," she shouted into Sordo's ear.

"Eight men and four horses. *Faltan caballos,"* he said. "Lacks horses."

"Seventeen people and nine horses," Pilar said. "Without accounting for transport."

Sordo said nothing.

"There is no way of getting horses?" Robert Jordan said into Sordo's best ear.

"In war a year," Sordo said. "Have four." He showed four fingers.

"Now you want eight for tomorrow."

"Yes," said Robert Jordan. "Knowing you are leaving. Having no need to be careful as you have been in this neighborhood. Not having to be cautious here now. You could not cut out and steal

eight head of horses?"

"Maybe," Sordo said. "Maybe none. Maybe more."

"You have an automatic rifle?" Robert Jordan asked. Sordo nodded.

"Where?"

"Up the hill."

"What kind?"

"Don't know name. With pans."

"How many rounds?"

"Five pans."

"Does anyone know how to use it?"

"Me. A little. Not shoot too much. Not want make noise here. Not want use cartridges."

"I will look at it afterwards," Robert Jordan said. "Have you hand grenades?"

"Plenty."

"How many rounds per rifle?"

"Plenty."

"How many?"

"One hundred fifty. More maybe."

"What about other people?"

"For what?"

"To have sufficient force to take the posts and cover the bridge while I am blowing it. We should have double what we have."

"Take posts don't worry. What time day?"

"Daylight."

"Don't worry."

"I could use twenty more men, to be sure," Robert Jordan said.

"Good ones do not exist. You want undependables?"

"No. How many good ones?"

"Maybe four."

"Why so few?"

"No trust."

“For horseholders?”

“Must trust much to be horseholders.”

‘’I’d like ten more good men if I could get them.”

“Four.”

“Anselmo told me there were over a hundred here in these hills.”

“No good.”

“You said thirty,” Robert Jordan said to Pilar. “Thirty of a certain degree of dependability.”

“What about the people of Elias?” Pilar shouted to Sordo. He shook his head.

“No good.”

“You can’t get ten?” Robert Jordan asked. Sordo looked at him with his flat, yellow eyes and shook his head.

“Four,” he said and held up four fingers.

“Yours are good?” Robert Jordan asked, regretting it as he said it.

Sordo nodded.

“Dentro de Lagraoedad,” he said in Spanish. “Within the limits of the danger.” He grinned. “Will be bad, eh?”

“Possibly.”

“Is the same to me,” Sordo said simply and not boasting. “Better four good than much bad. In this war always much bad, very little good. Every day fewer good. And Pablo?” he looked at Pilar.

“As you know,” Pilar said. “Worse every day.”

Sordo shrugged his shoulders.

“Take drink,” Sordo said to Robert Jordan. “I bring mine and four more. Makes twelve. Tonight we discuss all. I have sixty sticks dynamite. You want?”

“What per cent?”

“Don’t know. Common dynamite. I bring.”

“We’ll blow the small bridge above with that,” Robert Jordan said. “That is fine. You’ll come down tonight? Bring that, will you?

I've no orders for that but it should be blown."

"I come tonight. Then hunt horses."

"What chance for horses?"

"Maybe. Now eat."

Does he talk that way to everyone? Robert Jordan thought. Or is that his idea of how to make foreigners understand?

"And where are we going to go when this is done?" Pilar shouted into Sordo's ear.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"All that must be arranged," the woman said.

"Of course," said Sordo. "Why not?"

"It is bad enough," Pilar said. "It must be planned very well."

"Yes, woman," Sordo said. "What has thee worried?"

"Everything," Pilar shouted.

Sordo grinned at her.

"You've been going about with Pablo," he said.

So he does only speak that pidgin Spanish for foreigners, Robert Jordan thought. Good. I'm glad to hear him talking straight.

"Where do you think we should go?" Pilar asked.

"Where?"

"Yes, where?"

"There are many places," Sordo said. "Many places. You know Gredos?"

"There are many people there. All these places will be cleaned up as soon as they have time."

"Yes. But it is a big country and very wild."

"It would be very difficult to get there," Pilar said.

"Everything is difficult," El Sordo said. "We can get to Gredos as well as to anywhere else. Travelling at night. Here it is very dangerous now. It is a miracle we have been here this long. Gredos is safer country than this."

"Do you know where I want to go?" Pilar asked him.

"Where? The Paramera? That's no good."

“No,” Pilar said. “Not the Sierra de Paramera. I want to go to the Republic.”

“That is possible.”

“Would your people go?”

“Yes. If I say to.”

“Of mine, I do not know,” Pilar said. “Pablo would not want to although, truly, he might feel safer there. He is too old to have to go for a soldier unless they call more classes. The gypsy will not wish to go. I do not know about the others.”

“Because nothing passes her for so long they do not realize the danger,” El Sordo said.

“Since the planes today they will see it more,” Robert Jordan said. “But I should think you could operate very well from the Gredos.”

“What?” El Sordo said and looked at him with his eyes very flat. There was no friendliness in the way he asked the question.

“You could raid more effectively from there,” Robert Jordan said.

“So,” El Sordo said. “You know Gredos?”

“Yes. You could operate against the main line of the railway from there. You could keep cutting it as we are doing farther south in Estremadura. To operate from there would be better than returning to the Republic,” Robert Jordan said. “You are more useful there.”

They had both gotten sullen as he talked.

Sordo looked at Pilar and she looked back at him.

“You know Gredos?” Sordo asked. “Truly?”

“Sure,” said Robert Jordan.

“Where would you go?”

“Above Barco de Avila. Better places than here. Raid against the main road and the railroad between Bejar and Plasencia.”

“Very difficult,” Sordo said.

“We have worked against that same railroad in much more

dangerous country in Estremadura," Robert Jordan said.

"Who is we?"

"The *guerrilleros* group of Estremadura."

"You are many?"

"About forty."

"Was the one with the bad nerves and the strange name from there?" asked Pilar.

"Yes."

"Where is he now?"

"Dead, as I told you."

"You are from there, too?"

"Yes."

"You see what I mean?" Pilar said to him.

And I have made a mistake, Robert Jordan thought to himself. I have told Spaniards we can do something better than they can when the rule is never to speak of your own exploits or abilities. When I should have flattered them I have told them what I think they should do and now they are furious. Well, they will either get over it or they will not. They are certainly much more useful in the Gredos than here. The proof is that here they have done nothing since the train that Kashkin organized. It was not much of a show. It cost the fascists one engine and killed a few troops but they all talk as though it were the high point of the war. Maybe they will shame into going to the Gredos. Yes and maybe I will get thrown out of here too. Well, it is not a very rosy-looking dish anyway that you look into it.

"Listen *Inglés,"* Pilar said to him. "How are your nerves?"

"All right," said Robert Jordan. "O.K."

"Because the last dynamiter they sent to work with us, although a formidable technician, was very nervous."

"We have nervous ones," Robert Jordan said.

"I do not say that he was a coward because he comported himself very well," Pilar went on. "But he spoke in a very rare and

windy way." She raised her voice. "Isn't it true, Santiago, that the last dynamiter, he of the train, was a little rare?"

"Alga raro," the deaf man nodded and his eyes went over Robert Jordan's face in a way that reminded him of the round opening at the end of the wand of a vacuum cleaner. *"Si, alga raro, pero buena."*

"Murio," Robert Jordan said into the deaf man's ear. "He is dead."

"How was that?" the deaf man asked, dropping his eyes down from Robert Jordan's eyes to his lips.

"I shot him," Robert Jordan said. "He was too badly wounded to travel and I shot him."

"He was always talking of such a necessity," Pilar said. "It was his obsession."

"Yes," said Robert Jordan. "He was always talking of such a necessity and it was his obsession."

"Como fué?" the deaf man asked. "Was it a train?"

"It was returning from a train," Robert Jordan said. "The train was successful. Returning in the dark we encountered a fascist patrol and as we ran he was shot high in the back but without hitting any bone except the shoulder blade. He travelled quite a long way, but with the wound was unable to travel more. He was unwilling to be left behind and I shot him."

"Men as mal," said EI Sordo. "Less bad."

"Are you sure your nerves are all right?" Pilar said to Robert Jordan.

"Yes," he told her. "I am sure that my nerves are all right and I think that when we terminate this of the bridge you would do well to go to the Gredos."

As he said that, the woman started to curse in a flood of obscene invective that rolled over and around him like the hot white water splashing down from the sudden eruption of a geyser.

The deaf man shook his head at Robert Jordan and grinned in delight. He continued to shake his head happily as Pilar went on

vilifying and Robert Jordan knew that it was all right again now. Finally she stopped cursing, reached for the water jug, tipped it up and took a drink and said, calmly, "Then just shut up about what we are to do afterwards, will you, *Inglés?* You go back to the Republic and you take your piece with you and leave us others alone here to decide what part of these hills we'll die in."

"Live in," El Sordo said. "Calm thyself, Pilar."

"Live in and die in," Pilar said. "I can see the end of it well enough. I like thee, *Inglés,* but keep thy mouth off of what we must do when thy business is finished."

"It is thy business," Robert Jordan said. "I do not put my hand in it."

"But you did," Pilar said. "Take thy little cropped-headed whore and go back to the Republic but do not shut the door on others who are not foreigners and who loved the Republic when thou wert wiping thy mother's milk off thy chin."

Maria had come up the trail while they were talking and she heard this last sentence which Pilar, raising her voice again, shouted at Robert Jordan. Maria shook her head at Robert Jordan violently and shook her finger warningly. Pilar saw Robert Jordan looking at the girl and saw him smile and she turned and said, "Yes. I said whore and I mean it. And I suppose that you'll go to Valencia together and we can eat goat crut in Gredos."

"I'm a whore if thee wishes, Pilar," Maria said. "I suppose I am in all case if you say so. But calm thyself. What passes with thee?"

"Nothing," Pilar said and sat down on the bench, her voice calm now and all the metallic rage gone out of it. "I do not call thee that. But I have such a desire to go to the Republic."

"We can all go," Maria said.

"Why not?" Robert Jordan said. "Since thou seemest not to love the Gredos."

Sordo grinned at him.

"We'll see," Pilar said, her rage gone now. "Give me a glass of

that rare drink. I have worn my throat out with anger. We'll see. We'll see what happens."

"You see, Comrade," El Sordo explained. "It is the morning that is difficult." He was not talking the pidgin Spanish now and he was looking into Robert Jordan's eyes calmly and explainingly; not searchingly nor suspiciously, nor with the flat superiority of the old campaigner that had been in them before. "I understand your needs and I know the posts must be exterminated and the bridge covered while you do your work. This I understand perfectly. This is easy to do before daylight or at daylight."

"Yes," Robert Jordan said. "Run along a minute, will you?" he said to Maria without looking at her.

The girl walked away out of hearing and sat down, her hands clasped over her ankles.

"You see," Sordo said. "In that there is no problem. But to leave afterward and get out of this country in daylight presents a grave problem."

"Clearly," said Robert Jordan. "I have thought of it. It is daylight for me also."

"But you are one," El Sordo said. "We are various."

"There is the possibility of returning to the camps and leaving from there at dark," Pilar said, putting the glass to her lips and then lowering it.

"That is very dangerous, too," El Sordo explained. "That is perhaps even more dangerous."

"I can see how it would be," Robert Jordan said.

"To do the bridge in the night would be easy," El Sordo said. "Since you make the condition that it must be done at daylight, it brings grave consequences."

"I know it."

"You could not do it at night?"

"I would be shot for it."

"It is very possible we will all be shot for it if you do it in the

daytime."

"For me myself that is less important once the bridge is blown," Robert Jordan said. "But I see your viewpoint. You cannot work out a retreat for daylight?"

"Certainly," El Sordo said. "We will work out such a retreat. But I explain to you why one is preoccupied and why one is irritated. You speak of going to Gredos as though it were a military manceuvre to be accomplished. To arrive at Gredos would be a miracle."

Robert Jordan said nothing.

"Listen to me," the deaf man said. "I am speaking much. But it is so we may understand one another. We exist here by a miracle. By a miracle of laziness and stupidity of the fascists which they will remedy in time. Of course we are very careful and we make no disturbance in these hills."

"I know."

"But now, with this, we must go. We must think much about the manner of our going."

"Clearly."

"Then," said El Sordo. "Let us eat now. I have talked much."

"Never have I heard thee talk so much," Pilar said. "Is it this?" she held up the glass.

"No," El Sordo shook his head. "It isn't whiskey. It is that never have I had so much to talk of."

"I appreciate your aid and your loyalty," Robert Jordan said. "I appreciate the difficulty caused by the timing of the blowing of the bridge."

"Don't talk of that," El Sordo said. "We are here to do what we can do. But this is complicated."

"And on paper very simple," Robert Jordan grinned. "On paper the bridge is blown at the moment the attack starts in order that nothing shall come up the road. It is very simple."

"That they should let us do something on paper," El Sordo said.

“That we should conceive and execute something on paper.”

‘”Paper bleeds little,”’ Robert Jordan quoted the proverb.

“But it is very useful,” Pilar said. *“Es muy utíl.* What I would like to do is use thy orders for that purpose.”

“Me too,” said Robert Jordan. “But you could never win a war like that.”

“No,” the big woman said. “I suppose not. But do you know what I would like?”

“To go to the Republic,” El Sordo said. He had put his good ear close to her as she spoke. *“Ya irás, mujer.* Let us win this and it will all be Republic.”

“All right,” Pilar said. “And now, for God’s sake let us eat.”

Chapter Twelve

They left El Sordo's after eating and started down the trail. El Sordo had walked with them as far as the lower post.

"Salud," he said. "Until tonight."

"Salud, Camarada," Robert Jordan had said to him and the three of them had gone on down the trail, the deaf man standing looking after them. Maria had turned and waved her hand at him and El Sordo waved disparagingly with the abrupt, Spanish upward flick of the forearm as though something were being tossed away which seems the negation of all salutation which has not to do with business. Through the meal he had never unbuttoned his sheepskin coat and he had been carefully polite, careful to turn his head to hear and had returned to speaking his broken Spanish, asking Robert Jordan about conditions in the Republic politely; but it was obvious he wanted to be rid of them.

As they had left him, Pilar had said to him, "Well, Santiago?"

"Well, nothing, woman," the deaf man said. "It is all right. But I am thinking."

"Me, too," Pilar had said and now as they walked down the trail, the walking easy and pleasant down the steep trail through the pines that they had toiled up, Pilar said nothing. Neither Robert Jordan nor Maria spoke and the three of them travelled along fast until the trail rose steeply out of the wooded valley to come up through the timber, leave it, and come out into the high meadow.

It was hot in the late May afternoon and halfway up this last steep grade the woman stopped. Robert Jordan, stopping and looking back, saw the sweat beading on her forehead. He thought

her brown face looked pallid and the skin sallow and that there were dark areas under her eyes.

"Let us rest a minute," he said. "We go too fast."

"No," she said. "Let us go on."

"Rest, Pilar," Maria said. "You look badly."

"Shut up," the woman said. "Nobody asked for thy advice."

She started on up the trail but at the top she was breathing heavily and her face was wet with perspiration and there was no. doubt about her pallor now.

"Sit down, Pilar," Maria said. "Please, please sit down."

"All right," said Pilar and the three of them sat down under a pine tree and looked across the mountain meadow to where the tops of the peaks seemed to jut out from the roll of the high country with snow shining bright on them now in the early afternoon sun.

"What rotten stuff is the snow and how beautiful it looks," Pilar said. "What an illusion is the snow." She turned to Maria. "I am sorry 1 was rude to thee, *guapa.* I don't know what has held me today. I have an evil temper."

"I never mind what you say when you are angry," Maria told her. "And you are angry often."

"Nay, it is worse than anger," Pilar said, looking across at the peaks.

"Thou art not well," Maria said.

"Neither is it that," the woman said. "Come here, *guapa,* and put thy head in my lap."

Maria moved close to her, put her arms out and folded them as one does who goes to sleep without a pillow and lay with her head on her arms. She turned her face up at Pilar and smiled at her but the big woman looked on across the meadow at the mountains. She stroked the girl's head without looking down at her and ran a blunt finger across the girl's forehead and then around the line of her ear and down the line where the hair grew on her neck.

"You can have her in a little while, *Inglés,"* she said. Robert

Jordan was sitting behind her.

"Do not talk like that," Maria said.

"Yes, he can have thee," Pilar said and looked at neither of them. "I have never wanted thee. But I am jealous."

"Pilar," Maria said. "Do not talk thus."

"He can have thee," Pilar said and ran her finger around the lobe of the girl's ear. "But I am very jealous."

"But Pilar," Maria said. "It was thee explained to me there was nothing like that between us."

"There is always something like that," the woman said. "There is always something like something that there should not be. But with me there is not. Truly there is not. I want thy happiness and nothing more."

Maria said nothing but lay there, trying to make her head rest lightly.

"Listen, *guapa,"* said Pilar and ran her finger now absently but tracingly over the contours of her cheeks. "Listen, *guapa,* 1 love thee and he can have thee, I am no *tortillera* but a woman made for men. That is true. But now it gives me pleasure to say thus, in the daytime, that 1 care for thee."

"I love thee, too."

"Qué va. Do not talk nonsense. Thou dost not know even of what I speak."

"I know."

"Qué va, that you know. You are for the *Inglés.* That is seen and as it should be. That I would have. Anything else I would not have. I do not make perversions. I only tell you something true. Few people will ever talk to thee truly and no women. I am jealous and say it and it is there. And I say it."

"Do not say it," Maria said. "Do not say it, Pilar."

"Por qué , do not say it," the woman said, still not looking at either of them. "I will say it until it no longer pleases me to say it. And," she looked down at the girl now, "that time has come

already. I do not say it more, you understand?"

"Pilar," Maria said. "Do not talk thus."

"Thou art a very pleasant little rabbit," Pilar said. "And lift thy head now because this silliness is over."

"It was not silly," said Maria. "And my head is well where it is."

"Nay. Lift it," Pilar told her and put her big hands under the girl's head and raised it. "And thou, *Inglés?"* she said, still holding the girl's head as she looked across at the mountains. "What cat has eaten thy tongue?"

"No cat," Robert Jordan said.

"What animal then?" She laid the girl's head down on the ground.

"No animal," Robert Jordan told her.

"You swallowed it yourself, eh?"

"I guess so," Robert Jordan said.

"And did you like the taste?" Pilar turned now and grinned at him.

"Not much."

"I thought not," Pilar said. "I *thought* not. But I give you back our rabbit. Nor ever did I try to take your rabbit. That's a good name for her. I heard you call her that this morning."

Robert Jordan felt his face redden.

"You are a very hard woman," he told her.

"No," Pilar said. "But so simple I am very complicated. Are you very complicated, *Inglés?"*

"No. Nor not so simple."

"You please me, *Inglés,"* Pilar said. Then she smiled and leaned forward and smiled and shook her head. "Now if I could take the rabbit from thee and take thee from the rabbit."

"You could not."

"I know it," Pilar said and smiled again. "Nor would I wish to. But when I was young I could have."

"I believe it."

“You believe it?”

“Surely,” Robert Jordan said. “But such talk is nonsense.”

“It is not like thee,” Maria said.

“I am not much like myself today,” Pilar said. “Very little like myself. Thy bridge has given me a headache, *Inglés.”*

“We can tell it the Headache Bridge,” Robert Jordan said. “But I will drop it in that gorge like a broken bird cage.”

“Good,” said Pilar. “Keep on talking like that.”

“I’ll drop it as you break a banana from which you have removed the skin.”

“I could eat a banana now,” said Pilar. “Go on, *Inglés.* Keep on talking largely.”

“There is no need,” Robert Jordan said. “Let us get to camp.”

“Thy duty,” Pilar said. “It will come quickly enough. I said that I would leave the two of you.”

“No. I have much to do.”

“That is much too and does not take long.”

“Shut thy mouth, Pilar,” Maria said. “You speak grossly.”

“”I am gross,” Pilar said. “But I am also very delicate. *Soy muy delicada.* I will leave the two of you. And the talk of jealousness is nonsense. I was angry at Joaquín because I saw from his look how ugly I am. I am only jealous that you are nineteen. It is not a jealousy which lasts. You will not be nineteen always. Now I go.”

She stood up and with a hand on one hip looked at Robert Jordan, who was also standing. Maria sat on the ground under the tree, her head dropped forward.

“Let us all go to camp together,” Robert Jordan said. “It is better and there is much to do.”

Pilar nodded with her head toward Maria, who sat there, her head turned away from them, saying nothing. Pilar smiled and shrugged her shoulders almost imperceptibly and said, “You know the way?”

“I know it,” Maria said, not raising her head.

"Pues me uoy," Pilar said. "Then I am going. We'll have something hearty for you to eat, *Inglés."*

She started to walk off into the heather of the meadow toward the stream that led down through it toward the camp.

"Wait," Robert Jordan called to her. "It is better that we should all go together."

Maria sat there and said nothing.

Pilar did not turn.

"Qué va, go together," she said. "I will see thee at the camp."

Robert Jordan stood there.

"Is she all right?" he asked Maria. "She looked ill before."

"Let her go," Maria said, her head still down.

"I think I should go with her."

"Let her go," said Maria. "Let her go!"

Chapter Thirteen

They were walking through the heather of the mountain meadow and Robert Jordan felt the brushing of the heather against his legs, felt the weight of his pistol in its holster against his thigh, felt the sun on his head, felt the breeze from the snow of the mountain peaks coolon his back and, in his hand, he felt the girl's hand firm and strong, the fingers locked in his. From it, from the palm of her hand against the palm of his, from their fingers locked together, and from her wrist across his wrist something came from her hand, her fingers and her wrist to his that was as fresh as the first light air that moving toward you over the sea barely wrinkles the glassy surface of a calm, as light as a feather moved across one's lip, or a leaf falling when there is no breeze; so light that it could be felt with the touch of their fingers alone, but that was so strengthened, so intensified, and made so urgent, so aching and so strong by the hard pressure of their fingers and the close pressed palm and wrist, that it was as though a current moved up his arm and filled his whole body with an aching hollowness of wanting. With the sun shining on her hair, tawny as wheat, and on her gold-brown smooth-lovely face and on the curve of her throat he bent her head back and held her to him and kissed her. He felt her trembling as he kissed her and he held the length of her body tight to him and felt her breasts against his chest through the two khaki shirts, he felt them small and firm and he reached and undid the buttons on her shirt and bent and kissed her and she stood shivering, holding her head back, his arm behind her. Then she dropped her chin to his head and then he felt her hands holding his head and rocking it

against her. He straightened and with his two arms around her held her so tightly that she was lifted off the ground, tight against him, and he felt her trembling and then her lips were on his throat, and then he put her down and said, “Maria, oh, my Maria.”

Then he said, “Where should we go?”

She did not say anything but slipped her hand inside of his shirt and he felt her undoing the shirt buttons and she said, “You, too. I want to kiss, too.”

“No, little rabbit.”

“Yes. Yes. Everything as you.”

“Nay. That is an impossibility.”

“Well, then. Oh, then. Oh, then. Oh.”

Then there was the smell of heather crushed and the roughness of the bent stalks under her head and the sun bright on her closed eyes and all his life he would remember the curve of her throat with her head pushed back into the heather roots and her lips that moved smally and by themselves and the fluttering of the lashes on the eyes tight closed against the sun and against everything, and for her everything was red, orange, gold-red from the sun on the closed eyes, and it all was that color, all of it, the filling, the possessing, the having, all of that color, all in a blindness of that color. For him it was a dark passage which led to nowhere, then to nowhere, then again to nowhere, once again to nowhere, always and forever to nowhere, heavy on the elbows in the earth to nowhere, dark, never any end to nowhere, hung on all time always to unknowing nowhere, this time and again for always to nowhere, now not to be borne once again always and to nowhere, now beyond all bearing up, up, up and into nowhere, suddenly, scaldingly, holdingly all nowhere gone and time absolutely still and they were both there, time having stopped and he felt the earth move out and away from under them.

Then he was lying on his side, his head deep in the heather, smelling it and the smell of the roots and the earth and the sun

came through it and it was scratchy on his bare shoulders and along his flanks and the girl was lying opposite him with her eyes still shut and then she opened them and smiled at him and he said very tiredly and from a great but friendly distance, “Hello, rabbit.” And she smiled and from no distance said, “Hello, my *Inglés.”*

“I’m not an *Inglés,”* he said very lazily.

“Oh yes, you are,” she said. “You’re my *Inglés,”* and reached and took hold of both his ears and kissed him on the forehead.

“There,” she said. “How is that? Do I kiss thee better?”

Then they were walking along the stream together and he said, “Maria, I love thee and thou art so lovely and so wonderful and so beautiful and it does such things to me to be with thee that I feel as though I wanted to die when I am loving thee.”

“Oh,” she said. “I die each time. Do you not die?”

“No. Almost. But did thee feel the earth move?”

“Yes. As I died. Put thy arm around me, please.”

“No. I have thy hand. Thy hand is enough.”

He looked at her and across the meadow where a hawk was hunting and the big afternoon clouds were coming now over the mountains.

“And it is not thus for thee with others?” Maria asked him, they now walking hand in hand.

“No. Truly.”

“Thou hast loved many others.”

“Some. But not as thee.”

“And it was not thus? Truly?”

“It was a pleasure but it was not thus.”

“And then the earth moved. The earth never moved before?”

“Nay. Truly never.”

“Ay,” she said. “And this we have for one day.”

He said nothing.

“But we have had it now at least,” Maria said. “And do you like me too? Do I please thee? I will look better later.”

“Thou art very beautiful now.”

“Nay,” she said. “But stroke thy hand across my head.”

He did that feeling her cropped hair soft and flattening and then rising between his fingers and he put both hands on her head and turned her face up to his and kissed her.

“I like to kiss very much,” she said. “But I do not do it welL”

“Thou hast no need to kiss.”

“Yes, I have. If I am to be thy woman I should please thee in all ways.”

“You please me enough. I would not be more pleased. There is no thing I could do if I were more pleased.”

“But you will see,” she said very happily. “My hair amuses thee now because it is odd. But every day it is growing. It will be long and then I will not look ugly and perhaps you will love me very much.”

“Thou hast a lovely body,” he said. “The loveliest in the world.”

“It is only young and thin.”

“No. In a fine body there is magic. I do not know what makes it in one and not in another. But thou hast it.”

“For thee,” she said.

“Nay.”

“Yes. For thee and for thee always and only for thee. But it is little to bring thee. I would learn to take good care of thee. But tell me truly. Did the earth never move for thee before?”

“Never,” he said truly.

“Now am I happy,” she said. “Now am I truly happy.”

“You are thinking of something else now?” she asked him.

“Yes. My work.”

“I wish we had horses to ride,” Maria said. “In my happiness I would like to be on a good horse and ride fast with thee riding fast beside me and we would ride faster and faster, galloping, and never pass my happiness.”

“We could take thy happiness in a plane,” he said absently.

“And go over and over in the sky like the little pursuit planes shining in the sun,” she said. “Rolling it in loops and in dives. *Qué bueno!”* she laughed. “My happiness would not even notice it.”

“Thy happiness has a good stomach,” he said half hearing what she said.

Because now he was not there. He was walking beside her but his mind was thinking of the problem of the bridge now and it was all clear and hard and sharp as when a camera lens is brought into focus. He saw the two posts and Anselmo and the gypsy watching. He saw the road empty and he saw movement on it. He saw where he would place the two automatic rifles to get the most level field of fire, and who will serve them, he thought, me at the end, but who at the start? He placed the charges, wedged and lashed them, sunk his caps and crimped them, ran his wires, hooked them up and got back to where he had placed the old box of the exploder and then he started to think of all the things that could have happened and that might go wrong. Stop it, he told himself. You have made love to this girl and now your head is clear, properly clear, and you start to worry. It is one thing to think you must do and it is another thing to worry. Don’t worry. You mustn’t worry. You know the things that you may have to do and you know what may happen. Certainly it may happen.

You went into it knowing what you were fighting for. You were fighting against exactly what you were doing and being forced into doing to have any chance of winning. So now he was compelled to use these people whom he liked as you should use troops toward whom you have no feeling at all if you were to be successful. Pablo was evidently the smartest. He knew how bad it was instantly. The woman was all for it, and still was; but the realization of what it really consisted in had overcome her steadily and it had done plenty to her already. Sordo recognized it instantly and would do it but he did not like it any more than he, Robert Jordan, liked it.

So you say that it is not that which will happen to yourself but

that which may happen to the woman and the girl and to the others that you think of. All right. What would have happened to them if you had not come? What happened to them and what passed with them before you were ever here? You must not think in that way. You have no responsibility for them except in action. The orders do not come from you. They come from Golz. And who is Golz? A good general. The best you've ever served under. But should a man carry out impossible orders knowing what they lead to? Even though they come from Golz, who is the party as well as the army? Yes. He should carry them out because it is only in the performing of them that they can prove to be impossible. How do you know they are impossible until you have tried them? If everyone said orders were impossible to carry out when they were received where would you be? Where would we all be if you just said, "Impossible," when orders came?

He had seen enough of commanders to whom all orders were impossible. That swine Gomez in Estremadura. He had seen enough attacks when the flanks did not advance because it was impossible. No, he would carry out the orders and it was bad luck that you liked the people you must do it with.

In all the work that they, the *partizans,* did, they brought added danger and bad luck to the people that sheltered them and worked with them. For what? So that, eventually, there should be no more danger and so that the country should be a good place to live in. That was true no matter how trite it sounded.

If the Republic lost it would be impossible for those who believed in it to live in Spain. But would it? Yes, he knew that it would be, from the things that happened in the parts the fascists had already taken.

Pablo was a swine but the others were fine people and was it not a betrayal of them all to get them to do this? Perhaps it was. But if they did not do it two squadrons of cavalry would come and hunt them out of these hills in a week.

No. There was nothing to be gained by leaving them alone. Except that all people should be left alone and you should interfere with no one. So he believed that, did he? Yes, he believed that. And what about a planned society and the rest of it? That was for the others to do. He had something else to do after this war. He fought now in this war because it had started in a country that he loved and he believed in the Republic and that if it were destroyed life would be unbearable for all those people who believed in it. He was under Communist discipline for the duration of the war. Here in Spain the Communists offered the best discipline and the soundest and sanest for the prosecution of the war. He accepted their discipline for the duration of the war because, in the conduct of the war, they were the only party whose program and whose discipline he could respect.

What were his politics then? He had none now, he told himself. But do not tell anyone else that, he thought. Don't ever admit that. And what are you going to do afterwards? I am going back and earn my living teaching Spanish as before, and I am going to write a true book. I'll bet, he said. I'll bet that will be easy.

He would have to talk with Pablo about politics. It would certainly be interesting to see what his political development had been. The classical move from left to right, probably; like old Lerroux. Pablo was quite a lot like Lerroux. Prieto was as bad. Pablo and Prieto had about an equal faith in the ultimate victory. They all had the politics of horse thieves. He believed in the Republic as a form of government but the Republic would have to get rid of all of that bunch of horse thieves that brought it to the pass it was in when the rebellion started. Was there ever a people whose leaders were as truly their enemies as this one?

Enemies of the people. That was a phrase he might omit. That was a catch phrase he would skip. That was one thing that sleeping with Maria had done. He had gotten to be as bigoted and hide-bound about his politics as a hard-shelled Baptist and phrases like

enemies of the people came into his mind without his much criticizing them in any way. Any sort of *cliches* both revolutionary and patriotic. His mind employed them without criticism. Of course they were true but it was too easy to be nimble about using them. But since last night and this afternoon his mind was much clearer and cleaner on that business. Bigotry is an odd thing. To be bigoted you have to be absolutely sure that you are right and nothing makes that surety and righteousness like continence. Continence is the foe of heresy.

How would that premise stand up if he examined it? That was probably why the Communists were always cracking down on Bohemianism. When you were drunk or when you committed either fornication or adultery you recognized your own personal fallibility of that so mutable substitute for the apostles' creed, the party line. Down with Bohemianism, the sin of Mayakovsky. But Mayakovsky was a saint again. That was because he was safely dead. You'll be safely dead yourself, he told himself. Now stop thinking that sort of thing. Think about Maria.

Maria was very hard on his bigotry. So far she had not affected his resolution but he would much prefer not to die. He would abandon a hero's or a martyr's end gladly. He did not want to make a Therrnopylse, nor be Horatius at any bridge, nor be the Dutch boy with his finger in that dyke. No. He would like to spend some time with Maria. That was the simplest expression of it. He would like to spend a long, long time with her.

He did not believe there was ever going to be any such thing as a long time any more but if there ever was such a thing he would like to spend it with her. We could go into the hotel and register as Doctor and Mrs. Livingstone I presume, he thought.

Why not marry her? Sure, he thought. I will marry her. Then we will be Mr. and Mrs. Robert Jordan of Sun Valley, Idaho. Or Corpus Christi, Texas, or Butte, Montana.

Spanish girls make wonderful wives. I've never had one so I

know. And when I get my job back at the university she can be an instructor's wife and when undergraduates who take Spanish IV come in to smoke pipes in the evening and have those so valuable informal discussions about Quevedo, Lope de Vega, Gald6s and the other always admirable dead, Maria can tell them about how some of the blue-shirted crusaders for the true faith sat on her head while others twisted her arms and pulled her skirts up and stuffed them in her mouth.

I wonder how they will like Maria in Missoula, Montana? That is if I can get a job back in Missoula. I suppose that I am ticketed as a Red there now for good and will be on the general blacklist. Though you never know. You never can tell. They've no proof of what you do, and as a matter of fact they would never believe it if you told them, and my passport was valid for Spain before they issued the restrictions.

The time for getting back will not be until the fall of thirtyseven. I left in the summer of thirty-six and though the leave is for a year you do not need to be back until the fall term opens in the following year. There is a lot of time between now and the fall term. There is a lot of time between now and day after tomorrow if you want to put it that way. No. I think there is no need to worry about the university. Just you turn up there in the fall and it will be all right. Just try and turn up there.

But it has been a strange life for a long time now. Damned if it hasn't. Spain was your work and your job, so being in Spain was natural and sound. You had worked summers on engineering projects and in the forest service building roads and in the park and learned to handle powder, so the demolition was a sound and normal job too. Always a little hasty, but sound.

Once you accept the idea of demolition as a problem it is only a problem. But there was plenty that was not so good that went with it although God knows you took it easily enough. There was the constant attempt to approximate the conditions of successful

assassination that accompanied the demolition. Did big words make it more defensible? Did they make killing any more palatable? You took to it a little too readily if you ask me, he told himself. And what you will be like or just exactly what you will be suited for when you leave the service of the Republic is, to me, he thought, extremely doubtful. But my guess is you will get rid of all that by writing about it, he said. Once you write it down it is all gone. It will be a good book if you can write it. Much better than the other.

But in the meantime all the life you have or ever will have is today, tonight, tomorrow, today, tonight, tomorrow, over and over again (I hope), he thought and so you had better take what time there is and be very thankful for it. If the bridge goes bad. It does not look too good just now.

But Maria has been good. Has she not? Oh, has she not, he thought. Maybe that is what I am to get now from life. Maybe that is my life and instead of it being threescore years and ten it is forty-eight hours or just threescore hours and ten or twelve rather. Twenty-four hours in a day would be threescore and twelve for the three full days.

I suppose it is possible to live as full a life in seventy hours as in seventy years; granted that your life has been full up to the time that the seventy hours start and that you have reached a certain age.

What nonsense, he thought. What rot you get to thinking by yourself. That is *really* nonsense. And maybe it isn't nonsense too. Well, we will see. The last time I slept with a girl was in Madrid. No it wasn't. It was in the Escorial and, except that I woke in the night and thought it was some one else and was excited until I realized who it really was, it was just dragging ashes; except that it was pleasant enough. And the time before that was in Madrid and except for some lying and pretending I did to myself as to identity while things were going on, it was the same or something less. So I am no romantic glorifier of the Spanish Woman nor did I ever think

of a casual piece as anything much other than a casual piece in any country. But when I am with Maria I love her so that I feel, literally, as though T would die and I never believed in that nor thought that it could happen.

So if your life trades its seventy years for seventy hours I have that value now and I am lucky enough to know it. And if there is not any such thing as a long time, nor the rest of your lives, nor from now on, but there is only now, why then now is the thing to praise and I am very happy with it. Now, *ahara, maintenant, heute. Now,* it has a funny sound to be a whole world and your life. *Esta noche,* tonight, *ce soir: heute abend.* Life and wife, *Vie* and *Mari.* No it didn't work out. The French turned it into husband. There was now and *frau;* but that did not prove anything either. Take dead, *mort, muerto,* and *todt.* Todt was the deadest of them all. War, *guerre, guerra,* and *krieg. Krieg* was the most like war, or was it? Or was it only that he knew German the least well? Sweetheart, *cherie, prenda,* and *schatz.* He would trade them all for Maria. There was a name.

Well, they would all be doing it together and it would not be long now. It certainly looked worse all the time. It was just something that you could not bring off in the morning. In an impossible situation you hang on until night to get away. You try to last out until night to get back in. You are all right, maybe, if you can stick it out until dark and then get in. So what if you start this sticking it out at daylight? How about that? And that poor bloody Sordo abandoning his pidgin Spanish to explain it to him so carefully. As though he had not thought about that whenever he had done any particularly bad thinking ever since Golz had first mentioned it. As though he hadn't been living with that like a lump of undigested dough in the pit of his stomach ever since the night before the night before last.

What a business. You go along your whole life and they seem as though they mean something and they always end up not meaning

anything. There was never any of what this is. You think that is one thing that you will never have. And then, on a lousy show like this, co-ordinating two chicken-crut guerilla bands to help you blow a bridge under impossible conditions, to abort a counteroffensive that will probably already be started, you run into a girl like this Maria. Sure. That is what you would do. You ran into her rather late, that was all.

So a woman like that Pilar practically pushed this girl into your sleeping bag and what happens? Yes, what happens? What happens? You tell me what happens, please. Yes. That is just what happens. That is exactly what happens.

Don't lie to yourself about Pilar pushing her into your sleeping robe and try to make it nothing or to make it lousy. You were gone when you first saw her. When she first opened her mouth and spoke to you it was there already and you know it. Since you have it and you never thought you would have it, there is no sense throwing dirt at it, when you know what it is and you know it came the first time you looked at her as she came out bent over carrying that iron cooking platter.

It hit you then and you know it and so why lie about it? You went all strange inside every time you looked at her and every time she looked at you. So why don't you admit it? All right, I'll admit it. And as for Pilar pushing her onto you, all Pilar did was be an intelligent woman. She had taken good care of the girl and she saw what was coming the minute the girl came back into the cave with the cooking dish.

So she made things easier. She made things easier so that there was last night and this afternoon. She is a damned sight more civilized than you are and she knows what time is all about. Yes, he said to himself, I think we can admit that she has certain notions about the value of time. She took a beating and all because she did not want other people losing what she'd lost and then the idea of admitting it was lost was too big a thing to swallow. So she took a

beating back there on the hill and I guess we did not make it any easier for her.

Well, so that is what happens and what has happened and you might as well admit it and now you will never have two whole nights with her. Not a lifetime, not to live together, not to have what people were always supposed to have, not at all. One night that is past, once one afternoon, one night to come; maybe. No, sir.

Not time, not happiness, not fun, not children, not a house, not a bathroom, not a clean pair of pajamas, not the morning paper, not to wake up together, not to wake and know she's there and that you're not alone. No. None of that. But why, when this is all you are going to get in life of what you want; when you have found it; why not just one night in a bed with sheets?

You ask for the impossible. You ask for the ruddy impossible. So if you love this girl as much as you say you do, you had better love her very hard and make up in intensity what the relation will lack in duration and in continuity. Do you hear that? In the old days people devoted a lifetime to it. And now when you have found it if you get two nights you wonder where all the luck came from. Two nights. Two nights to love, honor and cherish. For better and for worse. In sickness and in death. No that wasn't it. In sickness and in health. Till death do us part. In two nights. Much more than likely. Much more than likely and now layoff that sort of thinking. You can stop that now. That's not good for you. Do nothing that is not good for you. Sure that's it.

This was what Golz had talked about. The longer he was around, the smarter Golz seemed. So this was what he was asking about; the compensation of irregular service. Had Golz had this and was it the urgency and the lack of time and the circumstances that made it? Was this something that happened to everyone given comparable circumstances? And did he only think it was something special because it was happening to him? Had Golz slept around in a hurry when he was commanding irregular cavalry in the Red Army and

had the combination of the circumstances and the rest of it made the girls seem the way Maria was?

Probably Golz knew all about this too and wanted to make the point that you must make your whole life in the two nights that are given to you; that living as we do now you must concentrate all of that which you should always have into the short time that you can have it.

It was a good system of belief. But he did not believe that Maria had only been made by the circumstances. Unless, of course, she is a reaction from her own circumstance as well as his. Her one circumstance is not so good, he thought. No, not so good.

If this was how it was then this was how it was. But there was no law that made him say he liked it. I did not know that I could ever feel what I have felt, he thought. Nor that this could happen to me. I would like to have it for my whole life. You will, the other part of him said. You will. You have it *now* and that is all your whole life is; now. There is nothing else than now. There is neither yesterday, certainly, nor is there any tomorrow. How old must you be before you know that? There is only now, and if now is only two days, then two days is your life and everything in it will be in proportion. This is how you live a life in two days. And if you stop complaining and asking for what you never will get, you will have a good life. A good life is not measured by any biblical span.

So now do not worry, take what you have, and do your work and you will have a long life and a very merry one. Hasn't it been merry lately? What are you complaining about? That's the thing about this sort of work, he told himself, and was very pleased with the thought, it isn't so much what you learn as it is the people you meet. He was pleased then because he was joking and he came back to the girl.

"I love you, rabbit," he said to the girl. "What was it you were saying?"

"I was saying," she told him, "that you must not worry about

your work because I will not bother you nor interfere. If there is anything I can do you will tell me."

"There's nothing," he said. "It is really very simple."

"I will learn from Pilar what I should do to take care of a man well and those things I will do," Maria said. "Then, as I learn, I will discover things for myself and other things you can tell me."

"There is nothing to do."

"Qué va, man, there is nothing! Thy sleeping robe, this morning, should have been shaken and aired and hung somewhere in the sun. Then, before the dew comes, it should be taken into shelter."

"Go on, rabbit."

"Thy socks should be washed and dried. I would see thee had two pair."

"What else?"

"If thou would show me I would clean and oil thy pistol."

"Kiss me," Robert Jordan said.

"Nay, this is serious. Wilt thou show me about the pistol? Pilar has rags and oil. There is a cleaning rod inside the cave that should fit it."

"Sure. I'll show you."

"Then," Maria said. "If you will teach me to shoot it either one of us could shoot the other and himself, or herself, if one were wounded and it were necessary to avoid capture."

"Very interesting," Robert Jordan said. "Do you have many ideas like that?"

"Not many," Maria said. "But it is a good one. Pilar gave me this and showed me how to use it," she opened the breast pocket of her shirt and took out a cut-down leather holder such as pocket combs are carried in and, removing a wide rubber band that closed both ends, took out a Gem type, single-edged razor blade. "I keep this always," she explained. "Pilar says you must make the cut here just below the ear and draw it toward here." She showed him with her finger. "She says there is a big artery there and that drawing the

blade from there you cannot miss it. Also, she says there is no pain and you must simply press firmly below the ear and draw it downward. She says it is nothing and that they cannot stop it if it is done."

"That's right," said Robert Jordan. "That's the carotid artery."

So she goes around with that all the time, he thought, as a definitely accepted and properly organized possibility.

"But I would rather have thee shoot me," Maria said. "Promise if there is ever any need that thou wilt shoot me."

"Sure," Robert Jordan said. "I promise."

"Thank thee very much," Maria told him. "I know it is not easy to do."

"That's all right," Robert Jordan said.

You forget all this, he thought. You forget about the beauties of a civil war when you keep your mind too much on your work. You have forgotten this. Well, you are supposed to. Kashkin couldn't forget it and it spoiled his work. Or do you think the old boy had a hunch? It was very strange because he had experienced absolutely no emotion about the shooting of Kashkin. He expected that at some time he might have it. But so far there had been absolutely none.

"But there are other things I can do for thee," Maria told him, walking close beside him, now, very serious and womanly.

"Besides shoot me?"

"Yes. I can roll cigarettes for thee when thou hast no more of those with tubes. Pilar has taught me to roll them very well, tight and neat and not spilling."

"Excellent," said Robert Jordan. "Do you lick them yourself?"

"Yes," the girl said, "and when thou art wounded I will care for thee and dress thy wound and wash thee and feed thee-"

"Maybe I won't be wounded," Robert Jordan said.

"Then when you are sick I will care for thee and make thee soups and clean thee and do all for thee. And I will read to thee."

"Maybe J won't get sick."

"Then I will bring thee coffee in the morning when thou wakest __"

"Maybe I don't like coffee," Robert Jordan told her.

"Nay, but you do," the girl said happily. "This morning you took two cups."

"Suppose I get tired of coffee and there's no need to shoot me and I'm neither wounded nor sick and I give up smoking and have only one pair of socks and hang up my robe myself. What then, rabbit?" he patted her on the back. "What then?"

"Then," said Maria, "I will borrow the scissors of Pilar and cut thy hair."

"I don't like to have my hair cut."

"Neither do I," said Maria. "And I like thy hair as it is. So. If there is nothing to do for thee, I will sit by thee and watch thee and in the nights we will make love."

"Good," Robert Jordan said. "The last project is very sensible."

"To me it seems the same," Maria smiled. "Oh, *Inglés,"* she said.

"My name is Roberto."

"Nay. But I call thee *Inglés* as Pilar does."

"Still it is Roberto."

"No," she told him. "Now for a whole day it is *Inglés.* And *Inglés,* can I help thee with thy work?"

"No. What I do now I do alone and very coldly in my head."

"Good," she said. "And when will it be finished?"

"Tonight, with luck."

"Good," she said.

Below them was the last woods that led to the camp.

"Who is that?" Robert Jordan asked and pointed.

"Pilar," the girl said, looking along his arm. "Surely it is Pilar."

At the lower edge of the meadow where the first trees grew the woman was sitting, her head on her arms. She looked like a dark bundle from where they stood; black against the brown of the tree

trunk.

"Come on," Robert Jordan said and started to run toward her through the knee-high heather. It was heavy and hard to run in and when he had run a little way, he slowed and walked. He could see the woman's head was on her folded arms and she looked broad and black against the tree trunk. He came up to her and said, "Pilar!" sharply.

The woman raised her head and looked up at him.

"Oh," she said. "You have terminated already?"

"Art thou ill?" he asked and bent down by her.

"Qué va," she said. "I was asleep."

"Pilar," Maria, who had come up, said and kneeled down by her. "How are you? Are you all right?"

"I'm magnificent," Pilar said but she did not get up. She looked at the two of them. "Well, *Inglés,"* she said. "You have been doing manly tricks again?"

"You are all right?" Robert Jordan asked, ignoring the words.

"Why not? I slept. Did you?"

"No."

"Well," Pilar said to the girl. "It seems to agree with you."

Maria blushed and said nothing.

"Leave her alone," Robert Jordan said.

"No one spoke to thee," Pilar told him. "Maria," she said and her voice was hard. The girl did not look up.

"Maria," the woman said again. "I said it seems to agree with thee."

"Oh, leave her alone," Robert Jordan said again.

"Shut up, you," Pilar said without looking at him. "Listen, Maria, tell me one thing."

"No," Maria said and shook her head.

"Maria," Pilar said, and her voice was as hard as her face and there was nothing friendly in her face. "Tell me one thing of thy own volition."

The girl shook her head.

Robert Jordan was thinking, if I did not have to work with this woman and her drunken man and her chicken-crut outfit, I would slap her so hard across the face that—

"Go ahead and tell me," Pilar said to the girl.

"No," Maria said. "No."

"Leave her alone," Robert Jordan said and his voice did not sound like his own voice. I'll slap her anyway and the hell with it, he thought.

Pilar did not even speak to him. It was not like a snake charming a bird, nor a cat with a bird. There was nothing predatory. Nor was there anything perverted about it. There was a spreading, though, as a cobra's hood spreads. He could feel this. He could feel the menace of the spreading. But the spreading was a domination, not of evil, but of searching. I wish I did not see this, Robert Jordan thought. But it is not a business for slapping.

"Maria," Pilar said. "I will not touch thee. Tell me now of thy own volition."

"De tu propia uoluntad," the words were in Spanish.

The girl shook her head.

"Maria," Pilar said. "Now and of thy own volition. You hear me? Anything at all."

"No," the girl said softly. "No and no."

"Now you will tell me," Pilar told her. "Anything at all. You will see. Now you will tell me."

"The earth moved," Maria said, not looking at the woman. "Truly. It was a thing I cannot tell thee."

"So," Pilar said and her voice was warm and friendly and there was no compulsion in it. But Robert Jordan noticed there were small drops of perspiration on her forehead and her lips. "So there was that. So that was it."

"It is true," Maria said and bit her lip.

"Of course it is true," Pilar said kindly. "But do not tell it to your

own people for they never will believe you. You have no *Cali* blood, *Inglés?"*

She got to her feet, Robert Jordan helping her up.

"No," he said. "Not that I know of."

"Nor has the Maria that she knows of," Pilar said, *"Pues es muy raro.* It is very strange."

"But it happened, Pilar," Maria said.

"Como Qué no, hija?" Pilar said. "Why not, daughter? When I was young the earth moved so that you could feel it all shift in space and were afraid it would go out from under you. It happened every night."

"You lie," Maria said.

"Yes," Pilar said. "I lie. It never moves more than three times in a lifetime. Did it *really* move?"

"Yes," the girl said. "Truly."

"For you, *Inglés?"* Pilar looked at Robert Jordan. "Don't lie."

"Yes," he said. "Truly."

"Good," said Pilar. "Good. That is something."

"What do you mean about the three times?" Maria asked. "Why do you say that?"

"Three times," said Pilar. "Now you've had one."

"Only three times?"

"For most people, never," Pilar told her. "You are sure it moved?"

"One could have fallen off," Maria said.

"I guess it moved, then," Pilar said. "Come, then, and let us get to camp."

"What's this nonsense about three times?" Robert Jordan said to the big woman as they walked through the pines together.

"Nonsense?" she looked at him wryly. "Don't talk to me of nonsense, little English."

"Is it a wizardry like the palms of the hands?"

"Nay, it is common and proven knowledge with *Gitanos."*

"But we are not *Gitanos.*"

"Nay. But you have had a little luck. Non-gypsies have a little luck sometimes."

"You mean it truly about the three times?"

She looked at him again, oddly. "Leave me, *Inglés,*" she said. "Don't molest me. You are too young for me to speak to."

"But, Pilar," Maria said.

"Shut up," Pilar told her. "You have had one and there are two more in the world for thee."

"And you?" Robert Jordan asked her.

"Two," said Pilar and put up two fingers. "Two. And there will never be a third."

"Why not?" Maria asked.

"Oh, shut up," Pilar said. "Shut up. *Busnes* of thy age bore me."

"Why not a third?" Robert Jordan asked.

"Oh, shut up, will you?" Pilar said. "Shut up!"

All right, Robert Jordan said to himself. Only I am not having any. I've known a lot of gypsies and they are strange enough. But so are we. The difference is we have to make an honest living. Nobody knows what tribes we came from nor what our tribal inheritance is nor what the mysteries were in the woods where the people lived that we came from. All we know is that we do not know. We know nothing about what happens to us in the nights. When it happens in the day though, it *is* something. Whatever happened, happened and now this woman not only has to make the girl say it when she did not want to; but she has to take it over and make it her own. She has to make it into a gypsy thing. I thought she took a beating up the hill but she was certainly dominating just now back there. If it had been evil she should have been shot. But it wasn't evil. It was only wanting to keep her hold on life. To keep it through Maria.

When you get through with this war you might take up the study of women, he said to himself. You could start with Pilar. She has put in a pretty complicated day, if you ask me. She never

brought in the gypsy stuff before. Except the hand, he thought. Yes, of course the hand. And I don't think she was faking about the hand. She wouldn't tell me what she saw, of course. Whatever she saw she believed in herself. But that proves nothing.

"Listen, Pilar," he said to the woman.

Pilar looked at him and smiled.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Don't be so mysterious," Robert Jordan said. "These mysteries tire me very much."

"So?" Pilar said.

"I do not believe in ogres, soothsayers, fortune tellers, or chickencrut gypsy witchcraft."

"Oh," said Pilar.

"No. And you can leave the girl alone."

"I will leave the girl alone."

"And leave the mysteries," Robert Jordan said. "We have enough work and enough things that will be done without complicating it with chicken-crut, Fewer mysteries and more work."

"I see," said Pilar and nodded her head in agreement. "And listen, *Inglés,"* she said and smiled at him. "Did the earth move?"

"Yes, God damn you. It moved."

Pilar laughed and laughed and stood looking at Robert Jordan laughing.

"Oh, *Inglés. Inglés,"* she said laughing. "You are very comical. You must do much work now to regain thy dignity."

The Hell with you, Robert Jordan thought. But he kept his mouth shut. While they had spoken the sun had clouded over and as he looked back up toward the mountains the sky was now heavy and gray.

"Sure," Pilar said to him, looking at the sky. "It will snow."

"Now? almost in June?"

"Why not? These mountains do not know the names of the months. We are in the moon of May."

“It can’t be snow,” he said. “It *can’t* snow.”

“Just the same, *Inglés,”* she said to him, “it will snow.”

Robert Jordan looked up at the thick gray of the sky with the sun gone faintly yellow, and now as he watched gone completely and the gray becoming uniform so that it was soft and heavy; the gray now cutting off the tops of the mountains.

“Yes,” he said. “I guess you are right.”

Chapter Fourteen

By the time they reached the camp it was snowing and the flakes were dropping diagonally through the pines. They slanted through the trees, sparse at first and circling as they fell, and then, as the cold wind came driving down the mountain, they came whirling and thick and Robert Jordan stood in front of the cave in a rage and watched them.

"We will have much snow," Pablo said. His voice was thick and his eyes were red and bleary.

"Has the gypsy come in?" Robert Jordan asked him.

"No," Pablo said. "Neither him nor the old man."

"Will you come with me to the upper post on the road?"

"No," Pablo said. "I will take no part in this."

"I will find it myself."

"In this storm you might miss it," Pablo said. "I would not go now."

"It's just downhill to the road and then follow it up."

"You could find it. But thy two sentries will be coming up now with the snow and you would miss them on the way."

"The old man is waiting for me."

"Nay. He will come in now with the snow."

Pablo looked at the snow that was blowing fast now past the mouth of the cave and said, "You do not like the snow, *Inglés?"* Robert Jordan swore and Pablo looked at him through his bleary eyes and laughed.

"With this thy offensive goes, *Inglés,"* he said. "Come into the cave and thy people will be in directly."

Inside the cave Maria was busy at the fire and Pilar at the kitchen table. The fire was smoking but, as the girl worked with it, poking in a stick of wood and then fanning it with a folded paper, there was a puff and then a flare and the wood was burning, drawing b;ightly as the wind sucked a draft out of the hole in the roof.

"And this snow," Robert Jordan said. "You think there will be much?"

"Much," Pablo said contentedly. Then called to Pilar, "You don't like it, woman, either? Now that you command you do not like this snow?"

"A mi qué?" Pilar said, over her shoulder. "If it snows it snows."

"Drink some wine, *Inglés,"* Pablo said. "I have been drinking all day waiting for the snow."

"Give me a cup," Robert Jordan said.

"To the snow," Pablo said and touched cups with him. Robert Jordan looked him in the eyes and clinked his cup. You blearyeyed murderous sod, he thought. I'd like to clink this cup against your teeth. *Take it easy,* he told himself, *take it easy.*

"It is very beautiful the snow," Pablo said. "You won't want to sleep outside with the snow falling."

So *that's* on your mind too is it? Robert Jordan thought. You've a lot of troubles, haven't you, Pablo?

"No?" he said, politely.

"No. Very cold," Pablo said. "Very wet."

You don't know why those old eiderdowns cost sixty-five dollars, Robert Jordan thought. I'd like to have a dollar for every time I've slept in that thing in the snow.

"Then I should sleep in here?" he asked politely.

"Yes."

"Thanks," Robert Jordan said. "I'll be sleeping outside."

"In the snow?"

"Yes" (damn your bloody, red pig-eyes and your swine-bristly

swines-end of a face). “In the snow.” (In the utterly-damned, ruinous, unexpected, slutting, defeat-conniving, bastard-cessery of the snow.)

He went over to where Maria had just put another piece of pine on the fire.

“Very beautiful, the snow,” he said to the girl.

“But it is bad for the work, isn’t it?” she asked him. “Aren’t you worried?”

“Qué va,” he said. “Worrying is no good. When will supper be ready?”

“I thought you would have an appetite,” Pilar said. “Do you want a cut of cheese now?”

“Thanks,” he said and she cut him a slice, reaching up to unhook the big cheese that hung in a net from the ceiling, drawing a knife across the open end and handing him the heavy slice. He stood, eating it. It was just a little too goaty to be enjoyable.

“Maria,” Pablo said from the table where he was sitting.

“What?” the girl asked.

“Wipe the table clean, Maria,” Pablo said and grinned at Robert Jordan.

“Wipe thine own spillings,” Pilar said to him. “Wipe first thy chin and thy shirt and then the table.”

“Maria,” Pablo called.

“Pay no heed to him. He is drunk,” Pilar said.

“Maria,” Pablo called. “It is still snowing and the snow is beautiful.”

He doesn’t know about that robe, Robert Jordan thought. Good old pig-eyes doesn’t know why I paid the Woods boys sixty-five dollars for that robe. I wish the gypsy would come in though. As soon as the gypsy comes I’ll go after the old man. I should go now but it is very possible that I would miss them. I don’t know where he is posted.

“Want to make snowballs?” he said to Pablo. “Want to have a

snowball fight?"

"What?" Pablo asked. "What do you propose?"

"Nothing," Robert Jordan said. "Got your saddles covered up good?"

"Yes."

Then in English Robert Jordan said, "Going to grain those horses or peg them out and let them dig for it?"

"What?"

"Nothing. It's your problem, old pal. I'm going out of here on my feet."

"Why do you speak in English?" Pablo asked.

"I don't know," Robert Jordan said. "When I get very tired sometimes I speak English. Or when I get very disgusted. Or baffled, say. When I get highly baffled I just talk English to hear the sound of it. It's a reassuring noise. You ought to try it sometime."

"What do you say, *Inglés?"* Pilar said. "It sounds very interesting but I do not understand."

"Nothing," Robert Jordan said. "I said, 'nothing' in English."

"Well then, talk Spanish," Pilar said. "It's shorter and simpler in Spanish."

"Surely," Robert Jordan said. But oh boy, he thought, oh Pablo, oh Pilar, oh Maria, oh you two brothers in the corner whose names I've forgotten and must remember, but I get tired of it sometimes. Of it and of you and of me and of the war and why in all why did it have to snow now? That's too bloody much. No, it's not. Nothing is too bloody much. You just have to take it and fight out of it and now stop prima-donnaing and accept the fact that it is snowing as you did a moment ago and the next thing is to check with your gypsy and pick up your old man. But to snow! Now in this month. Cut it out, he said to himself. Cut it out and take it. It's that cup, you know. How did it go about that cup? He'd either have to improve his memory or else never think of quotations because when you missed one it hung in your mind like a name you had forgotten

and you could not get rid of it. How did it go about that cup?

"Let me have a cup of wine, please," he said in Spanish. Then, "Lots of snow? Eh?" he said to Pablo. *"Mucha nieoe."*

The drunken man looked up at him and grinned. He nodded his head and grinned again.

"No offensive. No *aviones.* No bridge. Just snow," Pablo said.

"You expect it to last a long time?" Robert Jordan sat down by him. "You think we're going to be snowed in all summer, Pablo, old boy?"

"All summer, no," Pablo said. "Tonight and tomorrow, yes."

"What makes you think so?"

"There are two kinds of storms," Pablo said, heavily and judiciously. "One comes from the Pyrenees. With this one there is great cold. It is too late for this one."

"Good," Robert Jordan said. "That's something."

"This storm comes from the Cantabrico," Pablo said. "It comes from the sea. With the wind in this direction there will be a great storm and much snow."

"Where did you learn all this, old timer?" Robert Jordan asked.

Now that his rage was gone he was excited by this storm as he was always by all storms. In a blizzard, a gale, a sudden line squall, a tropical storm, or a summer thunder shower in the mountains there was an excitement that came to him from no other thing. It was like the excitement of battle except that it was clean. There is a wind that blows through battle but that was a hot wind; hot and dryas your mouth; and it blew heavily; hot and dirtily; and it rose and died away with the fortunes of the day. He knew that wind well.

But a snowstorm was the opposite of all of that. In the snowstorm you came close to wild animals and they were not afraid. They travelled across country not knowing where they were and the deer stood sometimes in the lee of the cabin. In a snowstorm you rode up to a moose and he mistook your horse for

another moose and trotted forward to meet you. In a snowstorm it always seemed, for a time, as though there were no enemies. In a snowstorm the wind could blow a gale; but it blew a white cleanness and the air was full of a driving whiteness and all things were changed and when the wind stopped there would be the stillness. This was a big storm and he might as well enjoy it. It was ruining everything, but you might as well enjoy it.

"I was an arroyero for many years," Pablo said. "We trucked freight across the mountains with the big carts before the camions came into use. In that business we learned the weather."

"And how did you get into the movement?"

"I was always of the left," Pablo said. "We had many contacts with the people of Asturias where they are much developed politically. I have always been for the Republic."

"But what were you doing before the movement?"

"I worked then for a horse contractor of Zaragoza. He furnished horses for the bull rings as well as remounts for the army. It was then that I met Pilar who was, as she told you, with the matador Finito de Palencia."

He said this with considerable pride.

"He wasn't much of a matador," one of the brothers at the table said looking at Pilar's back where she stood in front of the stove.

"No?" Pilar said, turning around and looking at the man. "He wasn't much of a matador?"

Standing there now in the cave by the cooking fire she could see him, short and brown and sober-faced, with the sad eyes, the cheeks sunken and the black hair curled wet on his forehead where the tight-fitting matador's hat had made a red line that no one else noticed. She saw him stand, now, facing the five-year-old bull, facing the horns that had lifted the horses high, the great neck thrusting the horse up, up, as that rider poked into that neck with the spiked pole, thrusting up and up until the horse went over with a crash and the rider fell against the wooden fence and, with the

bull's legs thrusting him forward, the big neck swung the horns that searched the horse for the life that was in him. She saw him, Finito, the not-sogood matador, now standing in front of the bull and turning sideways toward him. She saw him now clearly as he furled the heavy flannel cloth around the stick; the flannel hanging blood-heavy from the passes where it had swept over the bull's head and shoulders and the wet streaming shine of his withers and on down and over his back as the bull raised into the air and the banderillas clattered. She saw Finito stand five paces from the bull's head, profiled, the bull standing still and heavy, and draw the sword slowly up until it was level with his shoulder and then sight along the dipping blade at a point he could not yet see because the hull's head was higher than his eyes. He would bring that head down with the sweep his left arm would make with the wet, heavy cloth; but now he rocked back a little on his heels and sighted along the blade, profiled in front of the splintered horn; the bull's chest heaving and his eyes watching the cloth.

She saw him very clearly now and she heard his thin, clear voice as he turned his head and looked toward the people in the first row of the ring above the red fence and said, "Let's see if we can kill him like this!"

She could hear the voice and then see the first bend of the knee as he started forward and watch his voyage in onto the horn that lowered now magically as the bull's muzzle followed the low swept cloth, the thin, brown wrist controlled, sweeping the horns down and past, as the sword entered the dusty height of the withers.

She saw its brightness going in slowly and steadily as though the bull's rush plucked it into himself and out from the man's hand and she watched it move in until the brown knuckles rested against the taut hide and the short, brown man whose eyes had never left the entry place of the sword now swung his sucked-in belly clear of the horn and rocked clear from the animal, to stand holding the cloth on the stick in his left hand, raising his right hand to watch the bull

die.

She saw him standing, his eyes watching the bull trying to hold the ground, watching the bull sway like a tree before it falls, watching the bull fight to hold his feet to the earth, the short man's hand raised in a formal gesture of triumph. She saw him standing there in the sweated, hollow relief of it being over, feeling the relief that the bull was dying, feeling the relief that there had been no shock, no blow of the horn as he came clear from it and then, as he stood, the bull could hold to the earth no longer and crashed over, rolling dead with all four feet in the air, and she could see the short, brown man walking tired and unsmiling to the fence.

She knew he could not run across the ring if his life depended on it and she watched him walk slowly to the fence and wipe his mouth on a towel and look up at her and shake his head and then wipe his face on the towel and start his triumphant circling of the ring.

She saw him moving slowly, dragging around the ring, smiling, bowing, smiling, his assistants walking behind him, stooping, picking up cigars, tossing back hats; he circling the ring sad-eyed and smiling, to end the circle before her. Then she looked over and saw him sitting now on the step of the wooden fence, his mouth in a towel.

Pilar sawall this as she stood there over the fire and she said, "So he wasn't a good matador? With what class of people is my life passed now!"

"He was a good matador," Pablo said. "He was handicapped by his short stature."

"And clearly he was tubercular," Primitivo said.

"Tubercular?" Pilar said. "Who wouldn't be tubercular from the punishment he received? In this country where no poor man can ever hope to make money unless he is a criminal like Juan March, or a bullfighter, or a tenor in the opera? Why wouldn't he be tubercular? In a country where the bourgeoisie over-eat so that

their stomachs are all ruined and they cannot live without bicarbonate of soda and the poor are hungry from their birth till the day they die, why wouldn't he be tubercular? If you travelled under the seats in third-class carriages to ride free when you were following the fairs learning to fight as a boy, down there in the dust and dirt with the fresh spit and the dry spit, wouldn't you be tubercular if your chest was beaten out by horns?"

"Clearly," Primitivo said. "I only said he was tubercular."

"Of course he was tubercular," Pilar said, standing there with the big wooden stirring spoon in her hand. "He was short of stature and he had a thin voice and much fear of bulls. Never have I seen a man with more fear before the bullfight and never have I seen a man with less fear in the ring. "You," she said to Pablo. "You are afraid to die now. You think that is something of importance. But Finito was afraid all the time and in the ring he was like a lion."

"He had the fame of being very valiant," the second brother said.

"Never have I known a man with so much fear," Pilar said. "He would not even have a bull's head in the house. One time at the feria of Valladolid he killed a bull of Pablo Romero very well—"

"I remember," the first brother said. "I was at the ring. It was a soap-colored one with a curly forehead and with very high horns. It was a bull of over thirty arrobas. It was the last bull he killed in Valladolid."

"Exactly," Pilar said. "And afterwards the club of enthusiasts who met in the Cafe Colon and had taken his name for their club had the head of the bull mounted and presented it to him at a small banquet at the Cafe Colon. During the meal they had the head on the the wall, but it was covered with a cloth. I was at the table and others were there, Pastora, who is uglier than I am, and the Nina de los Peines, and other gypsies and whores of great category. It was a banquet, small but of great intensity and almost of a violence due to a dispute between Pastora and one of the most significant whores

over a question of propriety. I, myself, was feeling more than happy and I was sitting by Finito and I noticed he would not look up at the bull's head, which was shrouded in a purple cloth as the images of the saints are covered in church duing the week of the passion of our former Lord.

"Finito did not eat much because he had received a *palotaxo,* a blow from the flat of the horn when he had gone in to kill in his last corrida of the year at Zaragoza, and it had rendered him unconscious for some time and even now he could not hold food on his stomach and he would put his handkerchief to his mouth and deposit a quantity of blood in it at intervals throughout the banquet. What was I going to tell you?"

"The bull's head," Primitivo said. "The stuffed head of the bull."

"Yes," Pilar said. "Yes. But I must tell certain details so that you will see it. Finito was never very merry, you know. He was essentially solemn and I had never known him when we were alone to laugh at anything. Not even at things which were very comic. He took everything with great seriousness. He was almost as serious as Fernando. But this was a banquet given him by a club of *aficionados* banded together into the *Club Finito* and it was necessary for him to give an appearance of gaiety and friendliness and merriment. So all during the meal he smiled and made friendly remarks and it was only I who noticed what he was doing with the handkerchief. He had three handkerchiefs with him and he filled the three of them and then he said to me in a very low voice, 'Pilar, I can support this no further. I think I must leave.'

'"Let us leave then,' I said. For I saw he was suffering much. There was great hilarity by this time at the banquet and the noise was tremendous.

'"No. I cannot leave,' Finito said to me. 'After all it is a club named for me and I have an obligation.'

"Tf thou art ill let us go,' I said.

"'Nay,' he said. 'I will stay. Give me some of that manzanilla.'

"I did not think it was wise of him to drink, since he had eaten nothing, and since he had such a condition of the stomach; but he was evidently unable to support the merriment and the hilarity and the noise longer without taking something. So I watched him drink, very rapidly, almost a bottle of the manzanilla. Having exhausted his handkerchiefs he was now employing his napkin for the use he had previously made of his handkerchiefs.

"Now indeed the banquet had reached a stage of great enthusiasm and some of the least heavy of the whores were being paraded around the table on the shoulders of various of the club members. Pastora was prevailed upon to sing and El Nifio Ricardo played the guitar and it was very moving and an occasion of true joy and drunken friendship of the highest order. Never have I seen a banquet at which a higher pitch of real *flamenco* enthusiasm was reached and yet we had not arrived at the unveiling of the bull's head which was, after all, the reason for the celebration of the banquet.

"I was enjoying myself to such an extent and I was so busy clapping my hands to the playing of Ricardo and aiding to make up a team to clap for the singing of the Nifia de los Peines that I did not notice that Finito had filled his own napkin by now, and that he had taken mine. He was drinking more manzanilla now and his eyes were very bright, and he was nodding very happily to every one. He could not speak much because at any time, while speaking, he might have to resort to his napkin; but he was giving an appearance of great gayety and enjoyment which, after all, was what he was there for.

"So the banquet proceeded and the man who sat next to me had been the former manager of Rafael el Gallo and he was telling me a story, and the end of it was, 'So Rafael came to me and said, "You are the best friend I have in the world and the noblest. I love you like a brother and I wish to make you a present." So then he gave me a beautiful diamond stick pin and kissed me on both cheeks and

we were both very moved. Then Rafael el Gallo, having given me the diamond stick pin, walked out of the cafe and I said to Retana who was sitting at the table, "That dirty gypsy had just signed a contract with another manager.'"

'"'"What do you mean?" Retana asked.'

"'I've managed him for ten years and he has never given me a present before,' the manager of El Gallo had said. 'That's the only thing it can mean.' And sure enough it was true and that was how El Gallo left him.

"But at this point, Pastora intervened in the conversation, not perhaps as much to defend the good name of Rafael, since no one had ever spoken harder against him than she had herself, but because the manager had spoken against the gypsies by employing the phrase, 'Dirty gypsy.' She intervened so forcibly and in such terms that the manager was reduced to silence. I intervened to quiet Pastora and another *Gitana* intervened to quiet me and the din was such that no one could distinguish any words which passed except the one great word 'whore' which roared out above all other words until quiet was restored and the three of us who had intervened sat looking down into our glasses and then I noticed that Finito was staring at the bull's head, still draped in the purple cloth, with a look of horror on his face.

"At this moment the president of the Club commenced the speech which was to precede the unveiling of the head and all through the speech which was applauded with shouts of *'Ole!,* and poundings on the table I was watching Finito who was making use of his, no, my, napkin and sinking further back in his chair and staring with horror and fascination at the shrouded bull's head on the wall opposite him.

"Toward the end of the speech, Finito began to shake his head and he got further back in the chair all the time.

"'How are you, little one?' I said to him but when he looked at me he did not recognize me and he only shook his head and said,

‘No. No. No.’

“So the president of the Club reached the end of the speech and then, with everybody cheering him, he stood on a chair and reached up and untied the cord that bound the purple shroud over the head and slowly pulled it clear of the head and it stuck on one of the horns and he lifted it clear and pulled it off the sharp polished horns and there was that great yellow bull with black horns that swung way out and pointed forward, their white tips sharp as porcupine quills, and the head of the bull was as though he were alive; his forehead was curly as in life and his nostrils were open and his eyes were bright and he was there looking straight at Finito.

“Everyone shouted and applauded and Finito sunk further back in the chair and then everyone was quiet and looking at him and he said, ‘No. No,’ and looked at the bull and pulled further back and then he said, ‘No!’ very loudly and a big blob of blood came out and he didn’t even put up the napkin and it slid down his chin and he was still looking at the bull and he said, ‘All season, yes. To make money, yes. To eat, yes. But I can’t eat. Hear me? My stomach’s bad. But now with the season finished! No! No! No!’ He looked around at the table and then he looked at the bull’s head and said, ‘No,’ once more and then he put his head down and he put his napkin up to his mouth and then he just sat there like that and said nothing and the banquet, which had started so well, and promised to mark an epoch in hilarity and good fellowship was not a success.”

“Then how long after that did he die?” Primitivo asked.

“That winter,” Pilar said. “He never recovered from that last blow with the flat of the horn in Zaragoza. They are worse than a goring, for the injury is internal and it does not heal. He received one almost every time he went in to kill and it was for this reason he was not more successful. It was difficult for him to get out from over the horn because of his short stature. Nearly always the side of the horn struck him. But of course many were only glancing blows.”

“If he was so short he should not have tried to be a matador,” Primitivo said.

Pilar looked at Robert Jordan and shook her head. Then she bent over the big iron pot, still shaking her head.

What a people they are, she thought. What a people are the Spaniards, “and if he was so short he should not have tried to be a matador.” And I hear it and say nothing. I have no rage for that and having made an explanation I am silent. How simple it is when one knows nothing. *Qué sencillo!* Knowing nothing one says, “He was not much of a matador.” Knowing nothing another says, “He was tubercular.” And another says, after one, knowing, has explained, “If he was so short he should not have tried to be a matador.”

Now, bending over the fire, she saw on the bed again the naked brown body with the gnarled scars in both thighs, the deep, seared whorl below the ribs on the right side of the chest and the long white welt along the side that ended in the armpit. She saw the eyes closed and the solemn brown face and the curly black hair pushed back now from the forehead and she was sitting by him on the bed rubbing the legs, chafing the taut muscles of the calves, kneading them, loosening them, and then tapping them lightly with her folded hands, loosening the cramped muscles.

“How is it?” she said to him. “How are the legs, little one?”

“Very well, Pilar,” he would say without opening his eyes.

“Do you want me to rub the chest?”

“Nay, Pilar. Please do not touch it.”

“And the upper legs?”

“No. They hurt too badly.”

“But if I rub them and put liniment on, it will warm them and they will be better.”

“Nay, Pilar. Thank thee. I would rather they were not touched.”

“I will wash thee with alcohol.”

“Yes. Do it very lightly.”

“You were enormous in the last bull,” she would say to him and

he would say, “Yes, I killed him very well.”

Then, having washed him and covered him with a sheet, she would lie by him in the bed and he would put a brown hand out and touch her and say, “Thou art much woman, Pilar.” It was the nearest to a joke he ever made and then, usually, after the fight, he would go to sleep and she would lie there, holding his hand in her two hands and listening to him breathe.

He was often frightened in his sleep and she would feel his hand grip tightly and see the sweat bead on his forehead and if he woke, she said, “It’s nothing,” and he slept again. She was with him thus five years and never was unfaithful to him, that is almost never, and then after the funeral, she took up with Pablo who led picador horses in the ring and was like all the bulls that Finito had spent his life killing. But neither bull force nor bull courage lasted, she knew now, and what did last? I last, she thought. Yes, I have lasted. But for what?

“Maria,” she said. “Pay some attention to what you are doing. That is a fire to cook with. Not to burn down a city.”

Just then the gypsy came in the door. He was covered with snow and he stood there holding his carbine and stamping the snow from his feet.

Robert Jordan stood up and went over to the door, “Well?” he said to the gypsy.

“Six-hour watches, two men at a time on the big bridge,” the gypsy said. “There are eight men and a corporal at the road mender’s hut. Here is thy chronometer.”

“What about the sawmill post?”

“The old man is there. He can watch that and the road both.”

“And the road?” Robert Jordan asked.

“The same movement as always,” the gypsy said. “Nothing out of the usual. Several motor cars.”

The gypsy looked cold, his dark face was drawn with the cold and his hands were red. Standing in the mouth of the cave he took

off his jacket and shook it.

"I stayed until they changed the watch," he said. "It was changed at noon and at six. That is a long watch. I am glad I am not in their army."

"Let us go for the old man," Robert Jordan said, putting on his leather coat.

"Not me," the gypsy said. "I go now for the fire and the hot soup. I will tell one of these where he is and he can guide you. Hey, loafers," he called to the men who sat at the table. "Who wants to guide the *Inglés* to where the old man is watching the road?"

"I will go," Fernando rose. "Tell me where it is."

"Listen," the gypsy said. "It is here—" and he told him where the old man, Anselmo, was posted.

Chapter Fifteen

Anselmo was crouched in the lee of the trunk of a big tree and the snow blew past on either side. He was pressed close against the tree and his hands were inside of the sleeves of his jacket, each hand shoved up into the opposite sleeve, and his head was pulled as far down into the jacket as it would go. If I stay here much longer I will freeze, he thought, and that will be of no value. The *Inglés* told me to stay until I was relieved but he did not know then about this storm. There has been no abnormal movement on the road and I know the dispositions and the habits of this post at the sawmill across the road. I should go now to the camp. Anybody with sense would be expecting me to return to the camp. I will stay a little longer, he thought, and then go to the camp. It is the fault of the orders, which are too rigid. There is no allowance for a change in circumstance. He rubbed his feet together and then took his hands out of the jacket sleeves and bent over and rubbed his legs with them and patted his feet together to keep the circulation going. It was less cold there, out of the wind in the shelter of the tree, but he would have to start walking shortly. As he crouched, rubbing his feet, he heard a motorcar on the road. It had on chains and one link of chain was slapping and, as he watched, it came up the snow-covered road, green and brown painted, in broken patches of daubed color, the windows blued over so that you could not see in, with only a half circle left clear in the blue for the occupants to look out through. It was a two-year-old Rolls- Royce town car camouflaged for the use of the General Staff but Anselmo did not know that. He could not see into the car where three officers sat

wrapped in their capes. Two were on the back seat and one sat on the folding chair. The officer on the folding chair was looking out of the slit in the blue of the window as the car passed but Anselmo did not know this. Neither of them saw the other.

The car passed in the snow directly below him. Anselmo saw the chauffeur, red-faced and steel-helmeted, his face and helmet projecting out of the blanket cape he wore and he saw the forward jut of the automatic rifle the orderly who sat beside the chauffeur carried. Then the car was gone up the road and Anselmo reached into the inside of his jacket and took out from his shirt pocket the two sheets torn from Robert Jordan's notebook and made a mark after the drawing of a motorcar. It was the tenth car up for the day. Six had come down. Four were still up. It was not an unusual amount of cars to move upon that road but Anselmo did not distinguish between the Fords, Fiats, Opels, Renaults, and Citroens of the staff of the Division that held the passes and the line of the mountain and the Rolls-Royces, Lancias, Mercedes, and Isottas of the General Staff. This was the sort of distinction that Robert Jordan should have made and, if he had been there instead of the old man, he would have appreciated the significance of these cars which had gone up. But he was not there and the old man simply made a mark for a motorcar going up the road, on the sheet of note paper.

Anselmo was now so cold that he decided he had best go to camp before it was dark. He had no fear of missing the way, but he thought it was useless to stay longer and the wind was blowing colder all the time and there was no lessening of the snow. But when he stood up and stamped his feet and looked through the driving snow at the road he did not start off up the hillside but stayed leaning against the sheltered side of the pine tree.

The *Inglés* told me to stay, he thought. Even now he may be on the way here and, if I leave this place, he may lose himself in the snow searching for me. All through this war we have suffered from

a lack of discipline and from the disobeying of orders and I will wait a while still for the *Inglés.* But if he does not come soon I must go in spite of all orders for I have a report to make now, and I have much to do in these days, and to freeze here is an exaggeration and without utility.

Across the road at the sawmill smoke was coming out of the chimney and Anselmo could smell it blown toward him through the snow. The fascists are warm, he thought, and they are comfortable, and tomorrow night we will kill them. It is a strange thing and I do not like to think of it. I have watched them all day and they are the same men that we are. I believe that I could walk up to the mill and knock on the door and I would be welcome except that they have orders to challenge all travellers and ask to see their papers. It is only orders that come between us. Those men are not fascists. I call them so, but they are not. They are poor men as we are. They should never be fighting against us and I do not like to think of the killing.

These at this post are Gallegos. I know that from hearing them talk this afternoon. They cannot desert because if they do their families will be shot. Gallegos are either very intelligent or very dumb and brutal. I have known both kinds. Lister is a Gallego from the same town as Franco. I wonder what these Gallegos think of this snow now at this time of year. They have no high mountains such as these and in their country it always rains and it is always green.

A light showed in the window of the sawmill and Anselmo shivered and thought, damn that *Inglés!* There are the Gallegos warm and in a house here in our country, and I am freezing behind a tree and we live in a hole in the rocks like beasts in the mountain. But tomorrow, he thought, the beasts will come out of their hole and these that are now so comfortable will die warm in their blankets. As those died in the night when we raided Otero, he thought. He did not like to remember Otero.

In Otero, that night, was when he first killed and he hoped he

would not have to kill in this of the suppressing of these posts. It was in Otero that Pablo knifed the sentry when Anselmo pulled the blanket over his head and the sentry caught Anselmo's foot and held it, smothered as he was in the blanket, and made a crying noise in the blanket and Anselmo had to feel in the blanket and knife him until he let go of the foot and was still. He had his knee across the man's throat to keep him silent and he was knifing into the bundle when Pablo tossed the bomb through the window into the room where the men of the post were all sleeping. And when the flash came it was as though the whole world burst red and yellow before your eyes and two more bombs were in already. Pablo had pulled the pins and tossed them quickly through the window, and those who were not killed in their beds were killed as they rose from bed when the second bomb exploded. That was in the great days of Pablo when he scourged the country like a tartar and no fascist post was safe at night.

And now, he is as finished and as ended as a boar that has been altered, Anselmo thought, and, when the altering has been accomplished and the squealing is over you cast the two stones away and the boar, that is a boar no longer, goes snouting and rooting up to them and eats them. No, he is not that bad, Anselmo grinned, one can think too badly even of Pablo. But he is ugly enough and changed enough.

It is too cold, he thought. That the *Inglés* should come and that I should not have to kill in this of the posts. These four Gallegos and their corporal are for those who like the killing. The *Inglés* said that. I will do it if it is my duty but the *Inglés* said that I would be with him at the bridge and that this would be left to others. At the bridge there will be a battle and, if I am able to endure the battle, then I will have done all that an old man may do in this war. But let the *Inglés* come now, for I am cold and to see the light in the mill where I know that the Gallegos are warm makes me colder still. I wish that I were in my own house again and that this war were over. But you

have no house now, he thought. We must win this war before you can ever return to your house.

Inside the sawmill one of the soldiers was sitting on his bunk and greasing his boots. Another lay in his bunk sleeping. The third was cooking and the corporal was reading a paper. Their helmets hung on nails driven into the wall and their rifles leaned against the plank wall.

"What kind of country is this where it snows when it is almost June?" the soldier who was sitting on the bunk said.

"It is a phenomenon," the corporal said.

"We are in the moon of May," the soldier who was cooking said. "The moon of May has not yet terminated."

"What kind of a country is it where it snows in May?" the soldier on the bunk insisted.

"In May snow is no rarity in these mountains," the corporal said. "I have been colder in Madrid in the month of May than in any other month."

"And hotter, too," the soldier who was cooking said.

"May is a month of great contrasts in temperature," the corporal said. "Here, in Castile, May is a month of great heat but it can have much cold."

"Or rain," the soldier on the bunk said. "In this past May it rained almost every day."

"It did not," the soldier who was cooking said. "And anyway this past May was the moon of April."

"One could go crazy listening to thee and thy moons," the corporal said. "Leave this of the moons alone."

"Anyone who lives either by the sea or by the land knows that it is the moon and not the month which counts," the soldier who was cooking said. "Now for example, we have just started the moon of May. Yet it is coming on June."

"Why then do we not get definitely behind in the seasons?" the corporal said. "The whole proposition gives me a headache."

“You are from a town,” the soldier who was cooking said. “You are from Lugo. What would you know of the sea or of the land?”

“One learns more in a town than you *analJabetos* learn in thy sea or thy land.”

“In this moon the first of the big schools of sardines come,” the soldier who was cooking said. “In this moon the sardine boats will be outfitting and the mackerel will have gone north.”

“Why are you not in the navy if you come from Noya?” the corporal asked.

“Because I am not inscribed from Noya but from Negreira, where I was born. And from Negreira, which is up the river Tambre, they take you for the army.”

“Worse luck,” said the corporal.

“Do not think the navy is without peril,” the soldier who was sitting on the bunk said. “Even without the possibility of combat that is a dangerous coast in the winter.”

“Nothing can be worse than the army,” the corporal said.

“And you a corporal,” the soldier who was cooking said. “What a way of speaking is that?”

“Nay,” the corporal said. “I mean for dangers. I mean the endurance of bombardments, the necessity to attack, the life of the parapet.”

“Here we have little of that,” the soldier on the bunk said.

“By the Grace of God,” the corporal said. “But who knows when we will be subject to it again? Certainly we will not have something as easy as this forever!”

“How much longer do you think we will have this detail?”

“I don’t know,” the corporal said. “But I wish we could have it for all of the war.”

“Six hours is too long to be on guard,” the soldier who was cooking said.

“We will have three-hour watches as long as this storm holds,” the corporal said. “That is only normal.”

“What about all those staff cars?” the soldier on the bunk asked. “I did not like the look of all those staff cars.”

“Nor I,” the corporal said. “All such things are of evil omen.”

“And aviation,” the soldier who was cooking said. “Aviation is another bad sign.”

“But we have formidable aviation,” the corporal said. “The Reds have no aviation such as we have. Those planes this morning were something to make any man happy.”

“I have seen the Red planes when they were something serious,” the soldier on the bunk said. “I have seen those two motor bombers when they were a horror to endure.”

“Yes. But they are not as formidable as our aviation,” the corporal said. “We have an aviation that is insuperable.”

This was how they were talking in the sawmill while Anselmo waited in the snow watching the road and the light in the sawmill window.

I hope I am not for the killing, Anselmo was thinking. I think that after the war there will have to be some great penance done for the killing. If we no longer have religion after the war then I think there must be some form of civic penance organized that all may be cleansed from the killing or else we will never have a true and human basis for living. The killing is necessary, I know, but still the doing of it is very bad for a man and I think that, after all this is over and we have won the war, there must be a penance of some kind for the cleansing of us all.

Anselmo was a very good man and whenever he was alone for long, and he was alone much of the time, this problem of the killing returned to him.

I wonder about the *Inglés,* he thought. He told me that he did not mind it. Yet he seems to be both sensitive and kind. It may be that in the younger people it does not have an importance. It may be that in foreigners, or in those who have not had our religion, there is not the same attitude. But I think anyone doing it will be

brutalized in time and I think that even though necessary, it is a great sin and that afterwards we must do something very strong to atone for it.

It was dark now and he looked at the light across the road and shook his arms against his chest to warm them. Now, he thought, he would certainly leave for the camp; but something kept him there beside the tree above the road. It was snowing harder and Anselmo thought: if only we could blow the bridge tonight. On a night like this it would be nothing to take the posts and blow the bridge and it would all be over and done with. On a night like this you could do anything.

Then he stood there against the tree stamping his feet softly and he did not think any more about the bridge. The coming of the dark always made him feel lonely and tonight he felt so lonely that there was a hollowness in him as of hunger. In the old days he could help this loneliness by the saying of prayers and often coming home from hunting he would repeat a great number of the same prayer and it made him feel better. But he had not prayed once since the movement. He missed the prayers but he thought it would be unfair and hypocritical to say them and he did not wish to ask any favors or for any different treatment than all the men were receiving.

No, he thought, I am lonely. But so are all the soldiers and the wives of all the soldiers and all those who have lost families or parents. I have no wife, but I am glad that she died before the movement. She would not have understood it. I have no children and I never will have any children. I am lonely in the day when I am not working but when the dark comes it is a time of great loneliness. But one thing I have that no man nor any God can take from me and that is that I have worked well for the Republic. I have worked hard for the good that we will all share later. I have worked my best from the first of the movement and I have done nothing that I am ashamed of.

All that I am sorry for is the killing. But surely there will be an

opportunity to atone for that because for a sin of that sort that so many bear, certainly some just relief will be devised. I would like to talk with the *Inglés* about it but, being young, it is possible that he might not understand. He mentioned the killing before. Or was it I that mentioned it? He must have killed much, but he shows no signs of liking it. rn those who like it there is always a rottenness.

It must really be a great sin, he thought. Because certainly it is the one thing we have no right to do even though, as I know, it is necessary. But in Spain it is done too lightly and often without true necessity and there is much quick injustice which, afterward, can never be repaired. I wish I did not think about it so much, he thought. I wish there were a penance for it that one could commence now because it is the only thing that I have done in all my life that makes me feel badly when I am alone. All the other things are forgiven or one had a chance to atone for them by kindness or in some decent way. But I think this of the killing must be a very great sin and I would like to fix it up. Later on there may be certain days that one can work for the state or something that one can do that will remove it. It will probably be something that one pays as in the days of the Church, he thought, and smiled. The Church was well organized for sin. That pleased him and he was smiling in the dark when Robert Jordan came up to him. He came silently and the old man did not see him until he was there.

"Hola, viejo," Robert Jordan whispered and clapped him on the back. "How's the old one?"

"Very cold," Anselmo said. Fernando was standing a little apart, his back turned against the driving snow.

"Come on," Robert Jordan whispered. "Get on up to camp and get warm. It was a crime to leave you here so long."

"That is their light," Anselmo pointed.

"Where's the sentry?"

"You do not see him from here. He is around the bend."

"The hell with them," Robert Jordan said. "You tell me at camp.

Come on, let's go."

"Let me show you," Anselmo said.

''I'm going to look at it in the morning," Robert Jordan said.

"Here, take a swallow of this."

He handed the old man his flask. Anselmo tipped it up and swallowed.

"Ayee," he said and rubbed his mouth. "It is fire."

"Come on," Robert Jordan said in the dark. "Let us go."

It was so dark now you could only see the flakes blowing past and the rigid dark of the pine trunks. Fernando was standing a little way up the hill. Look at that cigar store Indian, Robert Jordan thought. J suppose I have to offer him a drink.

"Hey, Fernando," he said as he came up to him. "A swallow?"

"No," said Fernando. "Thank you."

Thank *you,* J mean, Robert Jordan thought. I'm glad cigar store Indians don't drink. There isn't too much of that left. Boy, I'm glad to see this old man, Robert Jordan thought. He looked at Anselmo and then clapped him on the back again as they started up the hill.

''I'm glad to see you, *viejo,"* he said to Anselmo. "If I ever get gloomy, when I see you it cheers me up. Come on, let's get up there."

They were going up the hill in the snow.

"Back to the palace of Pablo," Robert Jordan said to Anselmo. It sounded wonderful in Spanish.

"EI Palacio del Miedo," Anselmo said. "The Palace of Fear."

"La cueva de los huevos perdidos," Robert Jordan capped the other happily. "The cave of the lost eggs."

"What eggs?" Fernando asked.

"A joke," Robert Jordan said. "Just a joke. Not eggs, you know. The others."

"But why are they lost?" Fernando asked.

"I don't know," said Robert Jordan. "Take a book to tell you. Ask Pilar," then he put his arm around Anselmo's shoulder and held

him tight as they walked and shook him. “Listen,” he said. ‘’I’m glad to see you, hear? You don’t know what it means to find somebody in this country in the same place they were left.”

It showed what confidence and intimacy he had that he could say anything against the country.

“I am glad to see thee,” Anselmo said. “But I was just about to leave.”

“Like hell you would have,” Robert Jordan said happily. “You’d have frozen first.”

“How was it up above?” Anselmo asked.

“Fine,” said Robert Jordan. “Everything is fine.”

He was very happy with that sudden, rare happiness that can come to anyone with a command in a revolutionary arm; the happiness of finding that even one of your flanks holds. If both flanks ever held I suppose it would be too much to take, he thought. I don’t know who is prepared to stand that. And if you extend along a flank, any flank, it eventually becomes one man. Yes, one man. This was not the axiom he wanted. But this was a good man. One good man. You are going to be the left flank when we have the battle, he thought. I better not tell you that yet. It’s going to be an awfully small battle, he thought. But it’s going to be an awfully good one. Well, I always wanted to fight one on my own. I always had an opinion on what was wrong with everybody else’s, from Agincourt down. I will have to make this a good one. It is going to be small but very select. If I have to do what I think I will have to do it will be very select indeed.

“Listen,” he said to Anselmo. “I’m awfully glad to see you.”

“And me to see thee,” the old man said.

As they went up the hill in the dark, the wind at their backs, the storm blowing past them as they climbed, Anselmo did not feel lonely. He had not been lonely since the *Inglés* had clapped him on the shoulder. The *Inglés* was pleased and happy and they joked together. The *Inglés* said it all went well and he was not worried.

The drink in his stomach warmed him and his feet were warming now climbing.

"Not much on the road," he said to the *Inglés*.

"Good," the *Inglés* told him. "You will show me when we get there."

Anselmo was happy now and he was very pleased that he had stayed there at the post of observation.

If he had come in to camp it would have been all right. It would have been the intelligent and correct thing to have done under the circumstances, Robert Jordan was thinking. But he stayed as he was told, Robert Jordan thought. That's the rarest thing that can happen in Spain. To stay in a storm, in a way, corresponds to a lot of things. It's not for nothing that the Germans call an attack a storm. I could certainly use a couple more who would stay. I most certainly could. I wonder if that Fernando would stay. It's just possible. After all, he is the one who suggested coming out just now. Do you suppose he would stay? Wouldn't that be good? He's just about stubborn enough. I'll have to make some inquiries. Wonder what the old cigar store Indian is thinking about now.

"What are you thinking about, Fernando?" Robert Jordan asked.

"Why do you ask?"

"Curiosity," Robert Jordan said. "I am a man of great curiosity."

"I was thinking of supper," Fernando said.

"Do you like to eat?"

"Yes. Very much."

"How's Pilar's cooking?"

"Average," Fernando answered.

He's a second Coolidge, Robert Jordan thought. But, you know, I have just a hunch that he would stay.

The three of them plodded up the hill in the snow.

Chapter Sixteen

"El Sordo was here," Pilar said to Robert Jordan. They had come in out of the storm to the smoky warmth of the cave and the woman had motioned Robert Jordan over to her with a nod of her head. "He's gone to look for horses."

"Good. Did he leave any word for me?"

"Only that he had gone for horses."

"And we?"

"No sé," she said. "Look at him."

Robert Jordan had seen Pablo when he came in and Pablo had grinned at him. Now he looked over at him sitting at the board table and grinned and waved his hand.

"Inglés," Pablo called. "It's still falling, *Inglés."*

Robert Jordan nodded at him.

"Let me take thy shoes and dry them," Maria said. "I will hang them here in the smoke of the fire."

"Watch out you don't burn them," Robert Jordan told her. "I don't want to go around here barefoot. What's the matter?" he turned to Pilar. "Is this a meeting? Haven't you any sentries out?"

"In this storm? *Qué va."*

There were six men sitting at the table and leaning back against the wall. Anselmo and Fernando were still shaking the snow from their jackets, beating their trousers and rapping their feet against the wall by the entrance.

"Let me take thy jacket," Maria said. "Do not let the snow melt on it."

Robert Jordan slipped out of his jacket, beat the snow from his

trousers, and untied his shoes.

"You will get everything wet here," Pilar said.

"It was thee who called me."

"Still there is no impediment to returning to the door for thy brushing."

"Excuse me," Robert Jordan said, standing in his bare feet on the dirt floor. "Hunt me a pair of socks, Maria."

"The Lord and Master," Pilar said and poked a piece of wood into the fire.

"Hay que aprouechar ei tiempo," Robert Jordan told her. "You have to take advantage of what time there is."

"It is locked," Maria said.

"Here is the key," and he tossed it over.

"It does not fit this sack."

"It is the other sack. They are on top and at the side."

The girl found the pair of socks, closed the sack, locked it and brought them over with the key.

"Sit down and put them on and rub thy feet well," she said. Robert Jordan grinned at her.

"Thou canst not dry them with thy hair?" he said for Pilar to hear.

"What a swine," she said. "First he is the Lord of the Manor. Now he is our ex-Lord Himself. Hit him with a chunk of wood, Maria."

"Nay," Robert Jordan said to her. "I am joking because I am happy."

"You are happy?"

"Yes," he said. "I think everything goes very well."

"Roberto," Maria said. "Go sit down and dry thy feet and let me bring thee something to drink to warm thee."

"You would think that man had never dampened foot before," Pilar said. "Nor that a flake of snow had ever fallen."

Maria brought him a sheepskin and put it on the dirt floor of the

cave.

"There," she said. "Keep that under thee until thy shoes are dry."

The sheepskin was fresh dried and not tanned and as Robert Jordan rested his stocking feet on it he could feel it crackle like parchment.

The fire was smoking and Pilar called to Maria, "Blow up the fire, worthless one. This is no smokehouse."

"Blow it thyself," Maria said. "I am searching for the bottle that El Sordo left."

"It is behind his packs," Pilar told her. "Must you care for him as a sucking child?"

"No," Maria said. "As a man who is cold and wet. And a man who has just come to his house. Here it is." She brought the bottle to where Robert Jordan sat. "It is the bottle of this noon. With this bottle one could make a beautiful lamp. When we have electricity again, what a lamp we can make of this bottle." She looked at the pinch-bottle admiringly. "How do you take this, Roberto?"

"I thought I was *Inglés,"* Robert Jordan said to her.

"I call thee Roberto before the others," she said in a low voice and blushed. "How do you want it, Roberto?"

"Roberto," Pablo said thickly and nodded his head at Robert Jordan. "How do you want it, Don Roberto?"

"Do you want some?" Robert Jordan asked him.

Pablo shook his head. "I am making myself drunk with wine," he said with dignity.

"Go with Bacchus," Robert Jordan said in Spanish.

"Who is Bacchus?" Pablo asked.

"A comrade of thine," Robert Jordan said.

"Never have I heard of him," Pablo said heavily. "Never in these mountains."

"Give a cup to Anselmo," Robert Jordan said to Maria. "It is he who is cold." He was putting on the dry pair of socks and the

whiskey and water in the cup tasted clean and thinly warming. But it does not curl around inside of you the way the absinthe does, he thought. There is nothing like absinthe.

Who would imagine they would have whiskey up here, he thought. But La Granja was the most likely place in Spain to find it when you thought it over. Imagine Sordo getting a bottle for the visiting dynamiter and then remembering to bring it down and leave it. It wasn't just manners that they had. Manners would have been producing the bottle and having a formal drink. That was what the French would have done and then they would have saved what was left for another occasion. No, the true thoughtfulness of thinking the visitor would like it and then bringing it down for him to enjoy when you yourself were engaged in something where there was every reason to think of no one else but yourself and of nothing but the matter in hand-that was Spanish. One kind of Spanish, he thought. Remembering to bring the whiskey was one of the reasons you loved these people. Don't go romanticizing them, he thought. There are as many sorts of Spanish as there are Americans. But still, bringing the whiskey was very handsome.

"How do you like it?" he asked Anselmo.

The old man was sitting by the fire with a smile on his face, his big hands holding the cup. He shook his head.

"No?" Robert Jordan asked him.

"The child put water in it," Anselmo said.

"Exactly as Roberto takes it," Maria said. "Art thou something special?"

"No," Anselmo told her. "Nothing special at all. But I like to feel it burn as it goes down."

"Give me that," Robert Jordan told the girl, "and pour him some of that which burns."

He tipped the contents of the cup into his own and handed it back empty to the girl, who poured carefully into it from the bottle.

"Ah," Anselmo took the cup, put his head back and let it run

down his throat. He looked at Maria standing holding the bottle and winked at her, tears coming from both eyes. “That,” he said. “That.” Then he licked his lips. *“That* is what kills the worm that haunts us.”

“Roberto,” Maria said and came over to him, still holding the bottle. “Are you ready to eat?”

“Is it ready?”

“It is ready when you wish it.”

“Have the others eaten?”

“All except you, Anselmo and Fernando.”

“Let us eat then,” he told her. “And thou?”

“Afterwards with Pilar.”

“Eat now with us.”

“No. It would not be well.”

“Come on and eat. In my country a man does not eat before his woman.”

“That is thy country. Here it is better to eat after.”

“Eat with him,” Pablo said, looking up from the table. “Eat with him. Drink with him. Sleep with him. Die with him. Follow the customs of his country.”

“Are you drunk?” Robert Jordan said, standing in front of Pablo. The dirty, stubble-faced man looked at him happily.

“Yes,” Pablo said. “Where is thy country, *Inglés,* where the women eat with the men?”

“In *Estados Unidos* in the state of Montana.”

“Is it there that the men wear skirts as do the women?”

“No. That is in Scotland.”

“But listen,” Pablo said. “When you wear skirts like that, *Inglés* __”

“I don’t wear them,” Robert Jordan said.

“When you are wearing those skirts,” Pablo went on, “what do you wear under them?”

“I don’t know what the Scotch wear,” Robert Jordan said. “I’ve

wondered myself."

"Not the *Escoceses,"* Pablo said. "Who cares about the *Escoceses?* Who cares about anything with a name as rare as that? Not me. I don't care. You, I say, *Inglés.* You. What do you wear under your skirts in your country?"

"Twice I have told you that we do not wear skirts," Robert Jordan said. "Neither drunk nor in joke."

"But under your skirts," Pablo insisted. "Since it is well known that you wear skirts. Even the soldiers. J have seen photographs and also I have seen them in the Circus of Price. What do you wear under your skirts, *Inglés?"*

"Los cojones," Robert Jordan said.

Anselmo laughed and so did the others who were listening; all except Fernando. The sound of the word, of the gross word spoken before the women, was offensive to him.

"Well, that is normal," Pablo said. "But it seems to me that with enough *cojones* you would not wear skirts."

"Don't let him get started again, *Inglés,"* the flat-faced man with the broken nose who was called Primitivo said. "He is drunk. Tell me, what do they raise in your country?"

"Cattle and sheep," Robert Jordan said. "Much grain also and beans. And also much beets for sugar."

The three were at the table now and the others sat close by except Pablo, who sat by himself in front of a bowl of the wine. It was the same stew as the night before and Robert Jordan ate it hungrily.

"In your country there are mountains? With that name surely there are mountains," Primitivo asked politely to make conversation. He was embarrassed at the drunkenness of Pablo.

"Many mountains and very high."

"And are there good pastures?"

"Excellent; high pasture in the summer in forests controlled by the government. Then in the fall the cattle are brought down to the

lower ranges."

"Is the land there owned by the peasants?"

"Most land is owned by those who farm it. Originally the land was owned by the state and by living on it and declaring the intention of improving it, a man could obtain a title to a hundred and fifty hectares."

"Tell me how this is done," Agustín asked. "That is an agrarian reform which means something."

Robert Jordan explained the process of homesteading. He had never thought of it before as an agrarian reform.

"That is magnificent," Primitivo said. "Then you have a communism in your country?"

"No. That is done under the Republic."

"For me," Agustín said, "everything can be done under the Republic. I see no need for other form of government."

"Do you have no big proprietors?" Andrés asked.

"Many."

"Then there must be abuses."

"Certainly. There are many abuses."

"But you will do away with them?"

"We try to more and more. But there are many abuses still."

"But there are not great estates that must be broken up?"

"Yes. But there are those who believe that taxes will break them up."

"How?"

Robert Jordan, wiping out the stew bowl with bread, explained how the income tax and inheritance tax worked. "But the big estates remain. Also there are taxes on the land," he said.

"But surely the big proprietors and the rich will make a revolution against such taxes. Such taxes appear to me to be revolutionary. They will revolt against the government when they see that they are threatened, exactly as the fascists have done here," Primitivo said.

“It is possible.”

“Then you will have to fight in your country as we fight here.”

“Yes, we will have to fight.”

“But are there not many fascists in your country?”

“There are many who do not know they are fascists but will find it out when the time comes.”

“But you cannot destroy them until they rebel?”

“No,” Robert Jordan said. “We cannot destroy them. But we can educate the people so that they will fear fascism and recognize it as it appears and combat it.”

“Do you know where there are no fascists?” Andrés asked.

“Where?”

“In the town of Pablo,” Andrés said and grinned.

“You know what was done in that village?” Primitivo asked Robert Jordan.

“Yes. I have heard the story.”

“From Pilar?”

“Yes.”

“You could not hear all of it from the woman,” Pablo said heavily. “Because she did not see the end of it because she fell from a chair outside of the window.”

“You tell him what happened then,” Pilar said. “Since I know not the story, let you tell it.”

“Nay,” Pablo said. “I have never told it.”

“No,” Pilar said. “And you will not tell it. And now you wish it had not happened.”

“No,” Pablo said. “That is not true. And if all had killed the fascists as I did we would not have this war. But I would not have had it happen as it happened.”

“Why do you say that?” Primitivo asked him. “Are you changing your politics?”

“No. But it was barbarous,” Pablo said. “In those days I was very barbarous.”

"And now you are drunk," Pilar said.

"Yes," Pablo said. "With your permission."

"I liked you better when you were barbarous," the woman said. "Of all men the drunkard is the foulest. The thief when he is not stealing is like another. The extortioner does not practise in the home. The murderer when he is at home can wash his hands. But the drunkard stinks and vomits in his own bed and dissolves his organs in alcohol."

"You are a woman and you do not understand," Pablo said equably. "I am drunk on wine and I would be happy except for those people I have killed. All of them fill me with sorrow." He shook his head lugubriously.

"Give him some of that which Sordo brought," Pilar said. "Give him something to animate him. He is becoming too sad to bear."

"If I could restore them to life, I would," Pablo said.

"Go and obscenity thyself," Agustín said to him. "What sort of place is this?"

"I would bring them all back to life," Pablo said sadly. "Every one."

"Thy mother," Agustín shouted at him. "Stop talking like this or get out. Those were fascists you killed."

"You heard me," Pablo said. "I would restore them all to life."

"And then you would walk on the water," Pilar said. "In my life I have never seen such a man. Up until yesterday you preserved some remnants of manhood. And today there is not enough of you left to make a sick kitten. Yet you are happy in your soddenness."

"We should have killed all or none," Pablo nodded his head.

"All or none."

"Listen, *Inglés,"* Agustín said. "How did you happen to come to Spain? Pay no attention to Pablo. He is drunk."

"I came first twelve years ago to study the country and the language," Robert Jordan said. "I teach Spanish in a university."

"You look very little like a professor," Primitivo said.

“He has no beard,” Pablo said. “Look at him. He has no beard.”

“Are you truly a professor?”

“An instructor.”

“But you teach?”

“Yes.”

“But why Spanish?” Andrés asked. “Would it not be easier to teach English since you are English?”

“He speaks Spanish as we do,” Anselmo said. “Why should he not teach Spanish?”

“Yes. But it is, in a way, presumptuous for a foreigner to teach Spanish,” Fernando said. “I mean nothing against you, Don Roberto.”

“He’s a false professor,” Pablo said, very pleased with himself.

“He hasn’t got a beard.”

“Surely you know English better,” Fernando said. “Would it not be better and easier and clearer to teach English?”

“He doesn’t teach it to Spaniards—” Pilar started to intervene.

“I should hope not,” Fernando said.

“Let me finish, you mule,” Pilar said to him. “He teaches Spanish to Americans. North Americans.”

“Can they not speak Spanish?” Fernando asked. “South Americans can.”

“Mule,” Pilar said. “He teaches Spanish to North Americans who speak English.”

“Still and all I think it would be easier for him to teach English if that is what he speaks,” Fernando said.

“Can’t you hear he speaks Spanish?” Pilar shook her head hopelessly at Robert Jordan.

“Yes. But with an accent.”

“Of where?” Robert Jordan asked.

“Of Estremadura,” Fernando said primly.

“Oh my mother,” Pilar said. “What a people!”

“It is possible,” Robert Jordan said. “I have come here from

there."

"As he well knows," Pilar said. "You old maid," she turned to Fernando. "Have you had enough to eat?"

"I could eat more if there is a sufficient quantity," Fernando told her. "And do not think that I wish to say anything against you, Don Roberto—"

"Milk," Agustln said simply. "And milk again. Do we make the revolution in order to say Don Roberto to a comrade?"

"For me the revolution is so that all will say Don to all," Fernando said. "Thus should it be under the Republic."

"Milk," Agustín said. "Black milk."

"And I still think it would be easier and clearer for Don Roberto to teach English."

"Don Roberto has no beard," Pablo said. "He is a false professor."

"What do you mean, I have no beard?" Robert Jordan said. "What's this?" He stroked his chin and his cheeks where the three-day growth made a blond stubble.

"Not a beard," Pablo said. He shook his head. "That's not a beard." He was almost jovial now. "He's a false professor."

"I obscenity in the milk of all," Agustín said, "if it does not seem like a lunatic asylum here."

"You should drink," Pablo said to him. "To me everything appears normal. Except the lack of beard of Don Roberto." Maria ran her hand over Robert Jordan's cheek.

"He has a beard," she said to Pablo.

"You should know," Pablo said and Robert Jordan looked at him.

I don't think he is so drunk, Robert Jordan thought. No, not so drunk. And I think I had better watch myself.

"Thou," he said to Pablo. "Do you think this snow will last?"

"What do you think?"

"I asked you."

“Ask another,” Pablo told him. “I am not thy service of information. You have a paper from thy service of information. Ask the woman. She commands.”

“I asked thee.”

“Go and obscenity thyself,” Pablo told him. “Thee and the woman and the girl.”

“He is drunk,” Primitivo said. “Pay him no heed, *Inglés.”*

“I do not think he is so drunk,” Robert Jordan said.

Maria was standing behind him and Robert Jordan saw Pablo watching her over his shoulder. The small eyes, like a boar’s, were watching her out of the round, stubble-covered head and Robert Jordan thought: I have known many killers in this war and some before and they were all different; there is no common trait nor feature; nor any such thing as the criminal type; but Pablo is certainly not handsome.

“I don’t believe you can drink,” he said to Pablo. “Nor that you’re drunk.”

“I am drunk,” Pablo said with dignity. “To drink is nothing. It is to be drunk that is important. *Estoy muy borracho.”*

“I doubt it,” Robert Jordan told him. “Cowardly, yes.”

It was so quiet in the cave, suddenly, that he could hear the hissing noise the wood made burning on the hearth where Pilar cooked. He heard the sheepskin crackle as he rested his weight on his feet. He thought he could almost hear the snow falling outside. He could not, but he could hear the silence where it fell.

I’d like to kill him and have it over with, Robert Jordan was thinking. I don’t know what he is going to do, but it is nothing good. Day after tomorrow is the bridge and this man is bad and he constitutes a danger to the success of the whole enterprise. Come on. Let us get it over with.

Pablo grinned at him and put one finger up and wiped it across his throat. He shook his head that turned only a little each way on his thick, short neck.

“Nay, *Inglés,”* he said. “Do not provoke me.” He looked at Pilar and said to her, “It is not thus that you get rid of me.”

“Sinverguenza,” Robert Jordan said to him, committed now in his own mind to the action. *“Cobarde.”*

“It is very possible,” Pablo said. “But I am not to be provoked. Take something to drink, *Inglés,* and signal to the woman it was not successful.”

“Shut thy mouth,” Robert Jordan said. “I provoke thee for myself.

“It is not worth the trouble,” Pablo told him. “I do not provoke.”

“Thou art a *bicho raro, “* Robert Jordan said, not wanting to let it go; not wanting to have it fail for the second time; knowing as he spoke that this had all been gone through before; having that feeling that he was playing a part from memory of something that he had read or had dreamed, feeling it all moving in a circle.

“Very rare, yes,” Pablo said. “Very rare and very drunk. To your health, *Inglés.”* He dipped a cup in the wine bowl and held it up. *“SaIud y cojones. “*

He’s rare, all right, Robert Jordan thought, and smart, and very complicated. He could no longer hear the fire for the sound of his own breathing.

“Here’s to you,” Robert Jordan said, and dipped a cup into the wine. Betrayal wouldn’t amount to anything without all these pledges, he thought. Pledge up. *“Salad,”* he said. *“SaIud* and *Salud* again,” you *salud,* he thought. *Salud,* you *saIud.*

“Don Roberto,” Pablo said heavily.

“Don Pablo,” Robert Jordan said.

“You’re no professor,” Pablo said, “because you haven’t got a beard. And also to do away with me you have to assassinate me and, for this, you have not *cojones. “*

He was looking at Robert Jordan with his mouth closed so that his lips made a tight line, like the mouth of a fish, Robert Jordan thought. With that head it is like one of those porcupine fish that

swallow air and swell up after they are caught.

"Salud, Pablo," Robert Jordan said and raised the cup up and drank from it. "I am learning much from thee."

"I am teaching the professor," Pablo nodded his head. "Come on, Don Roberto, we will be friends."

"We are friends already," Robert Jordan said.

"But now we will be good friends."

"We are good friends already."

"I'm going to get out of here," Agustín said. "Truly, it is said that we must eat a ton of it in this life but I have twenty-five pounds of it stuck in each of my ears this minute."

"What is the matter, *negro?"* Pablo said to him. "Do you not like to see friendship between Don Roberto and me?"

"Watch your mouth about calling me *negro."* Agustín went over to him and stood in front of Pablo holding his hands low.

"So you are called," Pablo said.

"Not by thee."

"Well, then, *blanco—"*

"Nor that, either."

"What are you then, Red?"

"Yes. Red. *Rojo.* With the Red star of the army and in favor of the Republic. And my name is Agustín."

"What a patriotic man," Pablo said. "Look, *Inglés,* what an exemplary patriot."

Agustín hit him hard across the mouth with his left hand, bringing it forward in a slapping, backhand sweep. Pablo sat there. The corners of his mouth were wine-stained and his expression did not change, but Robert Jordan watched his eyes narrow, as a eat's pupils close to vertical slits in a strong light.

"Nor this," Pablo said. "Do not count on this, woman." He turned his head toward Pilar. "I am not provoked."

Agustín hit him again. This time he hit him on the mouth with his closed fist. Robert Jordan was holding his pistol in his hand

under the table. He had shoved the safety catch off and he pushed Maria away with his left hand. She moved a little way and he pushed her hard in the ribs with his left hand again to make her get really away. She was gone now and he saw her from the corner of his eye, slipping along the side of the cave toward the fire and now Robert Jordan watched Pablo's face.

The round-headed man sat staring at Agustín from his flat little eyes. The pupils were even smaller now. He licked his lips then, put up an arm and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, looked down and saw the blood on his hand. He ran his tongue over his lips, then spat.

"Nor that," he said. "I am not a fool. I do not provoke."

"Cabron," Agustín said.

"You should know," Pablo said. "You know the woman."

Agustín hit him again hard in the mouth and Pablo laughed at him, showing the yellow, bad, broken teeth in the reddened line of his mouth.

"Leave it alone," Pablo said and reached with a cup to scoop some wine from the bowl. "Nobody here has *cojones* to kill me and this of the hands is silly."

"Cobarde," Agustín said.

"Nor words either," Pablo said and made a swishing noise rinsing the wine in his mouth. He spat on the floor. "I am far past words."

Agustín stood there looking down at him and cursed him, speaking slowly, clearly, bitterly and contemptuously and cursing as steadily as though he were dumping manure on a field, lifting it with a dung fork out of a wagon.

"Nor of those," Pablo said. "Leave it, Agustín. And do not hit me more. Thou wilt injure thy hands."

Agustín turned from him and went to the door.

"Do not go out," Pablo said. "It is snowing outside. Make thyself comfortable in here."

"And thou! Thou!" Agustín turned from the door and spoke to him, putting all his contempt in the single, *"Tu."*

"Yes, me," said Pablo. "I will be alive when you are dead."

He dipped up another cup of wine and raised it to Robert Jordan. "To the professor," he said. Then turned to Pilar. "To the Senora Commander." Then toasted them all, "To all the illusioned ones."

Agustín walked over to him and, striking quickly with the side of his hand, knocked the cup out of his hand.

"That is a waste," Pablo said. "That is silly."

Agustín said something vile to him.

"No," Pablo said, dipping up another cup. "I am drunk, seest thou? When I am not drunk I do not talk. You have never heard me talk much. But an intelligent man is sometimes forced to be drunk to spend his time with fools."

"Go and obscenity in the milk of thy cowardice," Pilar said to him. "I know too much about thee and thy cowardice."

"How the woman talks," Pablo said. "I will be going out to see the horses."

"Go and befoul them," Agustín said. "Is not that one of thy customs?"

"No," Pablo said and shook his head. He was taking down his big blanket cape from the wall and he looked at Agustín. "Thou," he said, "and thy violence."

"What do you go to do with the horses?" Agustín said.

"Look to them," Pablo said.

"Befoul them," Agustín said. "Horse lover."

"I care for them very much," Pablo said. "Even from behind they are handsomer and have more sense than these people. Divert yourselves," he said and grinned. "Speak to them of the bridge, *Inglés.* Explain their duties in the attack. Tell them how to conduct the retreat. Where will you take them, *Inglés,* after the bridge? Where will you take your patriots? I have thought of it all day while

I have been drinking."

"What have you thought?" Agustín asked.

"What have I thought?" Pablo said and moved his tongue around exploringly inside his lips. *"Qué te importa,* what have I thought."

"Say it," Agustín said to him.

"Much," Pablo said. He pulled the blanket coat over his head, the roundness of his head protruding now from the dirty yellow folds of the blanket. "I have thought much."

"What?" Agustín said. "What?"

"I have thought you are a group of illusioned people," Pablo said. "Led by a woman with her brains between her thighs and a foreigner who comes to destroy you."

"Get out," Pilar shouted at him. "Get out and fist yourself into the snow. Take your bad milk out of here, you horse exhausted *maricón."*

"Thus one talks," Agustín said admiringly, but absent-mindedly. He was worried.

"I go," said Pablo. "But I will be back shortly." He lifted the blanket over the door of the cave and stepped out. Then from the door he called, "It's still falling, *Inglés."*

Chapter Seventeen

The only noise in the cave now was the hissing from the hearth where snow was falling through the hole in the roof onto the coals of the fire.

"Pilar," Fernando said. "Is there more of the stew?"

"Oh, shut up," the woman said. But Maria took Fernando's bowl over to the big pot set back from the edge of the fire and ladled into it. She brought it over to the table and set it down and then patted Fernando on the shoulder as he bent to eat. She stood for a moment beside him, her hand on his shoulder. But Fernando did not look up. He was devoting himself to the stew.

Agustín stood beside the fire. The others were seated. Pilar sat at the table opposite Robert Jordan.

"Now, *Inglés,"* she said, "you have seen how he is."

"What will he do?" Robert Jordan asked.

"Anything," the woman looked down at the table. "Anything. He is capable of doing anything."

"Where is the automatic rifler" Robert Jordan asked.

"There in the corner wrapped in the blanket," Primitivo said.

"Do you want it?"

"Later," Robert Jordan said. "I wished to know where it is."

"It is there," Primitivo said. "I brought it in and I have wrapped it in my blanket to keep the action dry. The pans are in that sack."

"He would not do that," Pilar said. "He would not do anything with the *máquina."*

"I thought you said he would do anything."

"He might," she said. "But he has no practice with the *máquina* .

He could toss in a bomb. That is more his style."

"It is an idiocy and a weakness not to have killed him," the gypsy said. He had taken no part in any of the talk all evening. "Last night Roberto should have killed him."

"Kill him," Pilar said. Her big face was dark and tired looking. "I am for it now."

"I was against it," Agustín said. He stood in front of the fire, his long arms hanging by his sides, his cheeks, stubble-shadowed below the cheekbones, hollow in the firelight. "Now I am for it," he said. "He is poisonous now and he would like to see us all destroyed."

"Let all speak," Pilar said and her voice was tired. "Thou, Andrés.?"

"Matarlo," the brother with the dark hair growing far down in the point on his forehead said and nodded his head.

"Eladio?"

"Equally," the other brother said. "To me he seems to constitute a great danger. And he serves for nothing."

"Primitive? "

"Equally."

"Fernando? "

"Could we not hold him as a prisoner?" Fernando asked.

"Who would look after a prisoner?" Primitivo said. "It would take two men to look after a prisoner and what would we do with him in the end?"

"We could sell him to the fascists," the gypsy said.

"None of that," Agustín said. "None of that filthiness."

"It was only an idea," Rafael, the gypsy, said. "It seems to me that the *facciosos* would be happy to have him."

"Leave it alone," Agustín said. "That is filthy."

"No filthier than Pablo," the gypsy justified himself.

"One filthiness does not justify another," Agustín said. "Well, that is all. Except for the old man and the *Inglés."*

"They are not in it," Pilar said. "He has not been their leader."

“One moment,” Fernando said. “I have not finished.”

“Go ahead,” Pilar said. “Talk until he comes back. Talk until he rolls a hand grenade under that blanket and blows this all up. Dynamite and all.”

“I think that you exaggerate, Pilar,” Fernando said. “I do not think that he has any such conception.”

“I do not think so either,” Agustín said. “Because that would blow the wine up too and he will be back in a little while to the wine.”

“Why not turn him over to EI Sordo and let EI Sordo sell him to the fascists?” Rafael suggested. “You could blind him and he would be easy to handle.”

“Shut up,” Pilar said. “I feel something very justified against thee too when thou talkest.”

“The fascists would pay nothing for him anyway,” Primitivo said. “Such things have been tried by others and they pay nothing. They will shoot thee too.”

“I believe that blinded he could be sold for something,” Rafael said.

“Shut up,” Pilar said. “Speak of blinding again and you can go with the other.”

“But, he, Pablo, blinded the *guardia civil* who was wounded,” the gypsy insisted. “You have forgotten that?”

“Close thy mouth,” Pilar said to him. She was embarrassed before Robert Jordan by this talk of blinding.

“I have not been allowed to finish,” Fernando interrupted.

“Finish,” Pilar told him. “Go on. Finish.”

“Since it is impractical to hold Pablo as a prisoner,” Fernando commenced, “and since it is repugnant to offer him—”

“Finish,” Pilar said. “For the love of God, finish.”

“—in any class of negotiation,” Fernando proceeded calmly, “I am agreed that it is perhaps best that he should be eliminated in order that the operations projected should be insured of the

maximum possibility of success."

Pilar looked at the little man, shook her head, bit her lips and said nothing.

"That is my opinion," Fernando said. "I believe we are justified in believing that he constitutes a danger to the Republic—"

"Mother of God," Pilar said. "Even here one man can make a bureaucracy with his mouth."

"Both from his own words and his recent actions," Fernando continued. "And while he is deserving of gratitude for his actions in the early part of the movement and up until the most recent time —"

Pilar had walked over to the fire. Now she came up to the table.

"Fernando," Pilar said quietly and handed a bowl to him. "Take this stew please in all formality and fill thy mouth with it and talk no more. We are in possession of thy opinion."

"But, how then—" Primitivo asked and paused without completing the sentence.

"Estoy listo," Robert Jordan said. "I am ready to do it. Since you are all decided that it should be done it is a service that I can do."

What's the matter? he thought. From listening to him I am beginning to talk like Fernando. That language must be infectious. French, the language of diplomacy. Spanish, the language of bureaucracy.

"No," Maria said. "No."

"This is none of thy business," Pilar said to the girl. "Keep thy mouth shut."

"I will do it tonight," Robert Jordan said.

He saw Pilar looking at him, her fingers on her lips. She was looking toward the door.

The blanket fastened across the opening of the cave was lifted and Pablo put his head in. He grinned at them all, pushed under the blanket and then turned and fastened it again. He turned around and stood there, then pulled the blanket cape over his head and

shook the snow from it.

"You were speaking of me?" he addressed them all. "I am interrupting?"

No one answered him and he hung the cape on a peg in the wall and walked over to the table.

"Qué tal?" he asked and picked up his cup which had stood empty on the table and dipped it into the wine bowl. "There is no wine," he said to Maria. "Go draw some from the skin."

Maria picked up the bowl and went over to the dusty, heavily distended, black-tarred wineskin that hung neck down from the wall and unscrewed the plug from one of the legs enough so that the wine squirted from the edge of the plug into the bowl. Pablo watched her kneeling, holding the bowl up and watched the light red wine flooding into the bowl so fast that it made a whirling motion as it filled it.

"Be careful," he said to her. "The wine's below the chest now." No one said anything.

"I drank from the belly-button to the chest today," Pablo said. "It's a day's work. What's the matter with you all? Have you lost your tongues?"

No one said anything at all.

"Screw it up, Maria," Pablo said. "Don't let it spill."

"There'll be plenty of wine," Agustín said. "You'll be able to be drunk."

"One has encountered his tongue," Pablo said and nodded to Agustín. "Felicitations. I thought you'd been struck dumb."

"By what?" Agustín asked.

"By my entry."

"Think est thou that thy entry carries importance?"

He's working himself up to it, maybe, Robert Jordan thought. Maybe Agustín is going to do it. He certainly hates him enough. I don't hate him, he thought. No, I don't hate him. He is disgusting but I do not hate him. Though that blinding business puts him in a

special class. Still this is their war. But he is certainly nothing to have around for the next two days. I am going to keep away out of it, he thought. I made a fool of myself with him once tonight and I am perfectly willing to liquidate him. But I am not going to fool with him beforehand. And there are not going to be any shooting matches or monkey business in here with that dynamite around either. Pablo thought of that, of course. And did you think of it, he said to himself? No, you did not and neither did Agustín. You deserve whatever happens to you, he thought.

"Agustín," he said.

"What?" Agustín looked up sullenly and turned his head away from Pablo.

"I wish to speak to thee," Robert Jordan said.

"Later."

"Now," Robert Jordan said. *"Par favor."*

Robert Jordan had walked to the opening of the cave and Pablo followed him with his eyes. Agustín, tall and sunken cheeked, stood up and came over to him. He moved reluctantly and contemptuously.

"Thou hast forgotten what is in the sacks?" Robert Jordan said to him, speaking so low that it could not be heard.

"Milk!" Agustín said. "One becomes accustomed and one forgets."

"I, too, forgot."

"Milk!" Agustín said. *"Lechel* What fools we are." He swung back loose-jointedly to the table and sat down. "Have a drink, Pablo, old boy," he said. "How were the horses?"

"Very good," Pablo said. "And it is snowing less."

"Do you think it will stop?"

"Yes," Pablo said. "It is thinning now and there are small, hard pellets. The wind will blow but the snow is going. The wind has changed."

"Do you think it will clear tomorrow?" Robert Jordan asked

him.

"Yes," Pablo said. "I believe it will be cold and clear. This wind is shifting."

Look at him, Robert Jordan thought. Now he is friendly. He has shifted like the wind. He has the face and the body of a pig and I know he is many times a murderer and yet he has the sensitivity of a good aneroid. Yes, he thought, and the pig is a very intelligent animal, too. Pablo has hatred for us, or perhaps it is only for our projects, and pushes his hatred with insults to the point where you are ready to do away with him and when he sees that this point has been reached he drops it and starts all new and clean again.

"We will have good weather for it, *Inglés,"* Pablo said to Robert Jordan.

"We," Pilar said. *"We?"*

"Yes, we," Pablo grinned at her and drank some of the wine. "Why not? I thought it over while I was outside. Why should we not agree?"

"In what?" the woman asked. "In what now?"

"In all," Pablo said to her. "In this of the bridge. I am with thee now."

"You are with us now?" Agustín said to him. "After what you have said?"

"Yes," Pablo told him. "With the change of the weather I am with thee."

Agustín shook his head. "The weather," he said and shook his head again. "And after me hitting thee in the face?"

"Yes," Pablo grinned at him and ran his fingers over his lips. "After that too."

Robert Jordan was watching Pilar. She was looking at Pablo as at some strange animal. On her face there was still a shadow of the expression the mention of the blinding had put there. She shook her head as though to be rid of that, then tossed it back. "Listen," she said to Pablo.

“Yes, woman.”

“What passes with thee?”

“Nothing,” Pablo said. “I have changed my opmlOn. Nothing more.”

“You were listening at the door,” she told him.

“Yes,” he said. “But I could hear nothing.”

“You fear that we will kill thee.”

“No,” he told her and looked at her over the wine cup. “I do not fear that. You know that.”

“Well, what passes with thee?” Agustín said. “One moment you are drunk and putting your mouth on all of us and disassociating yourself from the work in hand and speaking of our death in a dirty manner and insulting the women and opposing that which should be done—”

“I was drunk,” Pablo told him.

“And now—”

“I am not drunk,” Pablo said. “And I have changed my mind.”

“Let the others trust thee. I do not,” Agustín said.

“Trust me or not,” Pablo said. “But there is no one who can take thee to Gredos as I can.”

“Gredos?”

“It is the only place to go after this of the bridge.”

Robert Jordan, looking at Pilar, raised his hand on the side away from Pablo and tapped his right ear questioningly.

The woman nodded. Then nodded again. She said something to Maria and the girl came over to Robert Jordan’s side.

“She says, ‘Of course he heard,’” Maria said in Robert Jordan’s ear.

“Then Pablo,” Fernando said judicially. “Thou art with us now and in favor of this of the bridge?”

“Yes, man,” Pablo said. He looked Fernando squarely in the eye and nodded.

“In truth?” Pr imitivo asked.

"De veras," Pablo told him.

"And you think it can be successful?" Fernando asked. "You now have confidence?"

"Why not?" Pablo said. "Haven't you confidence?"

"Yes," Fernando said. "But I always have confidence."

"I'm going to get out of here," Agustín said.

"It is cold outside," Pablo told him in a friendly tone.

"Maybe," Agustín said. "But I can't stay any longer in this *manicornio."*

"Do not call this cave an insane asylum," Fernando said.

"A *manicornio* for criminal lunatics," Agustín said. "And I'm getting out before I'm crazy, too."

Chapter Eighteen

It is like a merry-go-round, Robert Jordan thought. Not a merrygo-round that travels fast, and with a calliope for music, and the children ride on cows with gilded horns, and there are rings to catch with sticks, and there is the blue, gas-Rare-lit early dark of the Avenue du Maine, with fried fish sold from the next stall, and a wheel of fortune turning with the leather Raps slapping against the posts of the numbered compartments, and the packages of lump sugar piled in pyramids for prizes. No, it is not that kind of a merry-go-round; although the people are waiting, like the men in caps and the women in knitted sweaters, their heads bare in the gaslight and their hair shining, who stand in front of the wheel of fortune as it spins. Yes, those are the people. But this is another wheel. This is like a wheel that goes up and around.

It has been around twice now. It is a vast wheel, set at an angle, and each time it goes around and then is back to where it starts. One side is higher than the other and the sweep it makes lifts you back and down to where you started. There are no prizes either, he thought, and no one would choose to ride this wheel. You ride it each time and make the turn with no intention ever to have mounted. There is only one turn; one large, elliptical, rising and falling turn and you are back where you have started. We are back again now, he thought, and nothing is settled.

It was warm in the cave and the wind had dropped outside. Now he was sitting at the table with his notebook in front of him figuring all the technical part of the bridge-blowing. He drew three sketches, figured his formulas, marked the method of blowing with two

drawings as clearly as a kindergarten project so that Anselmo could complete it in case anything should happen to himself during the process of the demolition. He finished these sketches and studied them.

Maria sat beside him and looked over his shoulder while he worked. He was conscious of Pablo across the table and of the others talking and playing cards and he smelled the odors of the cave which had changed now from those of the meal and the cooking to the fire smoke and man smell, the tobacco, red-wine and brassy, stale body smell, and when Maria, watching him finishing a drawing, put her hand on the table he picked it up with his left hand and lifted it to his face and smelled the coarse soap and water freshness from her washing of the dishes. He laid her hand down without looking at her and went on working and he could not see her blush. She let her hand lie there, close to his, but he did not lift it again.

Now he had finished the demolition project and he took a new page of the notebook and commenced to write out the operation orders. He was thinking clearly and well on these and what he wrote pleased him. He wrote two pages in the notebook and read them over carefully.

I think that is all, he said to himself. It is perfectly clear and I do not think there are any holes in it. The two posts will be destroyed and the bridge will be blown according to Golz's orders and that is all of my responsibility. All of this business of Pablo is something with which I should never have been saddled and it will be solved one way or another. There will be Pablo or there will be no Pablo. I care nothing about it either way. But I am not going to get on that wheel again. Twice I have been on that wheel and twice it has gone around and come back to where it started and I am taking no more rides on it.

He shut the notebook and looked up at Maria. *"Hola, guapa,"* he said to her. "Did you make anything out of all that?"

“No, Roberto,” the girl said and put her hand on his hand that still held the pencil. “Have you finished?”

“Yes. Now it is all written out and ordered.”

“What have you been doing, *Inglés?”* Pablo asked from across the table. His eyes were bleary again.

Robert Jordan looked at him closely. Stay off that wheel, he said to himself. Don’t step on that wheel. I think it is going to start to swing again.

“Working on the problem of the bridge,” he said civilly.

“How is it?” asked Pablo.

“Very good,” Robert Jordan said. “All very good.”

“I have been working on the problem of the retreat,” Pablo said and Robert Jordan looked at his drunken pig eyes and at the wine bowl. The wine bowl was nearly empty.

Keep off the wheel, he told himself. He is drinking again. Sure. But don’t you get on that wheel now. Wasn’t Grant supposed to be drunk a good part of the time during the Civil War? Certainly he was. I’ll bet Grant would be furious at the comparison if he could see Pablo. Grant was a cigar smoker, too. Well, he would have to see about getting Pablo a cigar. That was what that face really needed to complete it; a half chewed cigar. Where could he get Pablo a cigar?

“How does it go?” Robert Jordan asked politely.

“Very well,” Pablo said and nodded his head heavily and judiciously. *“Muy bien.”*

“You’ve thought up something?” Agustín asked from where they were playing cards.

“Yes,” Pablo said. “Various things.”

“Where did you find them? In that bowl?” Agustín demanded.

“Perhaps,” Pablo said. “Who knows? Maria, fill the bowl, will you, please?”

“In the wineskin itself there should be some fine ideas,” Agustín turned back to the card game. “Why don’t you crawl in and look for

them inside the skin?"

"Nay," said Pablo equably. "I search for them in the bowl."

He is not getting on the wheel either, Robert Jordan thought. It must be revolving by itself. I suppose you cannot ride that wheel too long. That is probably quite a deadly wheel. I'm glad we are off of it. It was making me dizzy there a couple of times. But it is the thing that drunkards and those who are truly mean or cruel ride until they die. It goes around and up and the swing is never quite the same and then it comes around down. Let it swing, he thought. They will not get me onto it again. No sir, General Grant, I am off that wheel.

Pilar was sitting by the fire, her chair turned so that she could see over the shoulders of the two card players who had their backs to her. She was watching the game.

Here it is the shift from deadliness to normal family life that is the strangest, Robert Jordan thought. It is when the damned wheel comes down that it gets you. But I am off that wheel, he thought. And nobody is going to get me onto it again.

Two days ago I never knew that Pilar, Pablo nor the rest existed, he thought. There was no such thing as Maria in the world. It was certainly a much simpler world. I had instructions from Golz that were perfectly clear and seemed perfectly possible to carry out although they presented certain difficulties and involved certain consequences. After we blew the bridge I expected either to get back to the lines or not get back and if we got back I was going to ask for some time in Madrid. No one has any leave in this war but I am sure I could get two or three days in Madrid.

In Madrid I wanted to buy some books, to go to the Florida Hotel and get a room and to have a hot bath, he thought. I was going to send Luis the porter out for a bottle of absinthe if he could locate one at the Mantequerias Leonesas or at any of the places off the Gran Via and I was going to lie in bed and read after the bath and drink a couple of absinthes and then I was going to call up

Gaylord's and see ifI could come up there and eat.

He did not want to eat at the Gran Via because the food was no good really and you had to get there on time or whatever there was of it would be gone. Also there were too many newspaper men there he knew and he did not want to have to keep his mouth shut. He wanted to drink the absinthes and to feel like talking and then go up to Gaylord's and eat with Karkov, where they had good food and real beer, and find out what was going on in the war.

He had not liked Gaylord's, the hotel in Madrid the Russians had taken over, when he first went there because it seemed too luxurious and the food was too good for a besieged city and the talk too cynical for a war. But I corrupted very easily, he thought. Why should you not have as good food as could be organized when you came back from something like this? And the talk that he had thought of as cynicism when he had first heard it had turned out to be much too true. This will be something to tell at Gaylord's, he thought, when this is over. Yes, when this is over.

Could you take Maria to Gaylord's? No. You couldn't. But you could leave her in the hotel and she could take a hot bath and be there when you came back from Gaylord's. Yes, you could do that and after you had told Karkov about her, you could bring her later because they would be curious about her and want to see her.

Maybe you wouldn't go to Gaylord's at all. You could eat early at the Gran Via and hurry back to the Florida. But you knew you would go to Gaylord's because you wanted to see all that again; you wanted to eat that food again and you wanted to see all the comfort of it and the luxury of it after this. Then you would come back to the Florida and there Maria would be. Sure, she would be there after this was over. After this was over. Yes, after this was over. If he did this well he would rate a meal at Gaylord's.

Gaylord's was the place where you met famous peasant and worker Spanish commanders who had sprung to arms from the people at the start of the war without any previous military training

and found that many of them spoke Russian. That had been the first big disillusion to him a few months back and he had started to be cynical to himself about it. But when he realized how it happened it was all right. They *were* peasants and workers. They had been active in the 1934 revolution and had to flee the country when it failed and in Russia they had sent them to the military academy and to the Lenin Institute the Comintern maintained so they would be ready to fight the next time and have the necessary military education to command.

The Comintern had educated them there. In a revolution you could not admit to outsiders who helped you nor that anyone knew more than he was supposed to know. He had learned that. If a thing was right fundamentally the lying was not supposed to matter. There was a lot of lying though. He did not care for the lying at first. He hated it. Then later he had come to like it. It was part of being an insider but it was a very corrupting business.

It was at Gaylord's that you learned that Valentin González, called EI Campesino or The Peasant, had never been a peasant but was an ex-sergeant in the Spanish Foreign Legion who had deserted and fought with Abd eI Krim. That was all right, too. Why shouldn't he be? You had to have these peasant leaders quickly in this sort of war and a real peasant leader might be a little too much like Pablo. You couldn't wait for the real Peasant Leader to arrive and he might have too many peasant characteristics when he did. So you had to manufacture one. At that, from what he had seen of Campesino, with his black beard, his thick negroid lips, and his feverish, staring eyes, he thought he might give almost as much trouble as a real peasant leader. The last time he had seen him he seemed to have gotten to believe his own publicity and think he was a peasant. He was a brave, tough man; no braver in the world. But God, how he talked too much. And when he was excited he would say anything no matter what the consequences of his indiscretion. And those consequences had been many already. He was a wonderful Brigade

Commander though in a situation where it looked as though everything was lost. He never knew when everything was lost and if it was, he would fight out of it.

At Gaylord's, too, you met the simple stonemason, Enrique Lister from Galicia, who now commanded a division and who talked Russian, too. And you met the cabinet worker, Juan Modesto from Andaluda who had just been given an Army Corps. He never learned his Russian in Puerto de Santa Maria although he might have if they had a Berlitz School there that the cabinet makers went to. He was the most trusted of the young soldiers by the Russians because he was a true party man, "a hundred per cent" they said, proud to use the Americanism. He was much more intelligent than Lister or El Campesino.

Sure, Gaylord's was the place you needed to complete your education. It was there you learned how it was all really done instead of how it was supposed to be done. He had only started his education, he thought. He wondered whether he would continue with it long. Gaylord's was good and sound and what he needed. At the start when he had still believed all the nonsense it had come as a shock to him. But now he knew enough to accept the necessity for all the deception and what he learned at Gaylord's only strengthened him in his belief in the things that he did hold to be true. He liked to know how it really was; not how it was supposed to be. There was always lying in a war. But the truth of Lister, Modesto, and EI Campesino was much better than the lies and legends. Well, some day they would tell the truth to everyone and meantime he was glad there was a Gaylord's for his own learning of it.

Yes, that was where he would go in Madrid after he had bought the books and after he had lain in the hot bath and had a couple of drinks and had read awhile. But that was before Maria had come into all this that he had that plan. All right. They would have two rooms and she could do what she liked while he went up there and

he'd come back from Gaylord's to her. She had waited up in the hills all this time. She could wait a little while at the Hotel Florida. They would have three days in Madrid. Three days could be a long time. He'd take her to see the Marx Brothers at the Opera. That had been running for three months now and would certainly be good for three months more. She'd like the Marx Brothers at the Opera, he thought. She'd like that very much.

It was a long way from Gaylord's to this cave though. No, that was not the long way. The long way was going to be from this cave to Gaylord's. Kashkin had taken him there first and he had not liked it. Kashkin had said he should meet Karkov because Karkov wanted to know Americans and because he was the greatest lover of Lope de Vega in the world and thought "Fuente Ovejuna" was the greatest play ever written. Maybe it was at that, but he, Robert Jordan, did not think so.

He had liked Karkov but not the place. Karkov was the most intelligent man he had ever met. Wearing black riding boots, gray breeches, and a gray tunic, with tiny hands and feet, puffily fragile of face and body, with a spitting way of talking through his bad teeth, he looked comic when Robert Jordan first saw him. But he had more brains and more inner dignity and outer insolence and humor than any man that he had ever known.

Gaylord's itself had seemed indecently luxurious and corrupt. But why shouldn't the representatives of a power that governed a sixth of the world have a few comforts? Well, they had them and Robert Jordan had at first been repelled by the whole business and then had accepted it and enjoyed it. Kashkin had made him out to be a hell of a fellow and Karkov had at first been insultingly polite and then, when Robert Jordan had not played at being a hero but had told a story that was really funny and obscenely discreditable to himself, Karkov had shifted from the politeness to a relieved rudeness and then to insolence and they had become friends.

Kashkin had only been tolerated there. There was

somethingwrong with Kashkin evidently and he was working it out In Spain. They would not tell him what it was but maybe they would now that he was dead. Anyway, he and Karkov had become friends and he had become friends too with the incredibly thin, drawn, dark, loving, nervous, deprived and unbitter woman with a lean, neglected body and dark, gray-streaked hair cut short who was Karkov's wife and who served as an interpreter with the tank corps. He was a friend too of Karkov's mistress, who had cat-eyes, reddish gold hair (sometimes more red; sometimes more gold, depending on the coiffeurs), a lazy sensual body (made to fit well against other bodies), a mouth made to fit other mouths, and a stupid, ambitious and utterly loyal mind. This mistress loved gossip and enjoyed a periodically controlled promiscuity which seemed only to amuse Karkov. Karkov was supposed to have another wife somewhere besides the tank-corps one, maybe two more, but nobody was very sure about that. Robert Jordan liked both the wife he knew and the mistress. He thought he would probably like the other wife, too, if he knew her, if there was one. Karkov had good taste in women.

There were sentries with bayonets downstairs outside the portecochere at Gaylord's and tonight it would be the pleasantest and most comfortable place in all of besieged Madrid. He would like to be there tonight instead of here. Though it was all right here, now they had stopped that wheel. And the snow was stopping too.

He would like to show his Maria to Karkov but he could not take her there unless he asked first and he would have to see how he was received after this trip. Golz would be there after this attack was over and if he had done well they would all know it from Golz. Golz would make fun of him, too, about Maria. After what he'd said to him about no girls.

He reached over to the bowl in front of Pablo and dipped up a cup of wine. "With your permission," he said.

Pablo nodded. He is engaged in his military studies, I imagine,

Robert Jordan thought. Not seeking the bubble reputation in the cannon's mouth but seeking the solution to the problem in yonder bowl. But you know the bastard must be fairly able to have run this band successfully for as long as he did. Looking at Pablo he wondered what sort of guerilla leader he would have been in theAmerican Civil War. There were lots of them, he thought. But we know very little about them. Not the Quantrills, nor the Mosbys, nor his own grandfather, but the little ones, the bushwhackers. And about the drinking. Do you suppose Grant really was a drunk? His grandfather always claimed he was. That he was always a little drunk by four o'clock in the afternoon and that before Vicksburg sometimes during the siege he was very drunk for a couple of days. But grandfather claimed that he functioned perfectly normally no matter how much he drank except that sometimes it was very hard to wake him. But if you *could* wake him he was normal.

There wasn't any Grant, nor any Sherman nor any Stonewall Jackson on either side so far in this war. No. Nor any [eb Stuart either. Nor any Sheridan. It was overrun with McClellans though. The fascists had plenty of McClellans and we had at least three of them.

He had certainly not seen any military geniuses in this war. Not a one. Nor anything resembling one. Kleber, Lucasz, and Hans had done a fine job of their share in the defense of Madrid with the International Brigades and then the old bald, spectacled, conceited, stupid-as-an-owl, unintelligent-in-conversation, braveand- as-dumb-as-a-bull, propaganda-build-up defender of Madrid, Miaja, had been so jealous of the publicity Kleber received that he had forced the Russians to relieve Kleber of his command and send him to Valencia. Kleber was a good soldier; but limited and he *did* talk too much for the job he had. Golz was a good general and a fine soldier but they always kept him in a subordinate position and never gave him a free hand. This attack was going to be his biggest show so far and Robert Jordan did not like too much what he had heard about

the attack. Then there was Gall, the Hungarian, who ought to be shot if you could believe half you heard at Gaylord's. Make it if you can believe ten per cent of what you hear at Gaylord's, Robert Jordan thought.

He wished that he had seen the fighting on the plateau beyond Guadalajara when they beat the Italians. But he had been down in Estremadura then. Hans had told him about it one night in Gaylord's two weeks ago and made him see it all. There was one moment when it was really lost when the Italians had broken the line near Trijueque and the Twelfth Brigade would have been cut off if the Torija-Brihuega road had been cut. "But knowing they were Italians," Hans had said, "we attempted to manceuvre which would have been unjustifiable against other troops. And it was successful."

Hans had shown it all to him on his maps of the battle. Hans carried them around with him in his map case all the time and still seemed marvelled and happy at the miracle of it. Hans was a fine soldier and a good companion. Lister's and Modesto's and Carnpesino's Spanish troops had all fought well in that battle, Hans had told him, and that was to be credited to their leaders and to the discipline they enforced. But Lister and Campesino and Modesto had been told many of the moves they should make by their Russian military advisers. They were like students flying a machine with dual controls which the pilot could take over whenever they made a mistake. Well, this year would show how much and how well they learned. After a while there would not be dual controls and then we would see how well they handled divisions and army corps alone.

They were Communists and they were disciplinarians. The discipline that they would enforce would make good troops. Lister was murderous in discipline. He was a true fanatic and he had the complete Spanish lack of respect for life. In a few armies since the Tartar's first invasion of the West were men executed summarily for

as little reason as they were under his command. But he knew how to forge a division into a fighting unit. It is one thing to hold positions. It is another to attack positions and take them and it is something very different to manceuvre an army in the field, Robert Jordan thought as he sat there at the table. From what I have seen of him, I wonder how Lister will be at that once the dual controls are gone? But maybe they won't go, he thought. I wonder if they will go? Or whether they will strengthen? I wonder what the Russian stand is on the whole business? Gaylord's is the place, he thought. There is much that I need to know now that I can learn only at Gaylord's.

At one time he had thought Gaylord's had been bad for him. It was the opposite of the puritanical, religious communism of Velazquez 63, the Madrid palace that had been turned into the International Brigade headquarters in the capital. At Velazquez 63 it was like being a member of a religious order—and Gaylord's was a long way away from the feeling you had at the headquarters of the Fifth Regiment before it had been broken up into the brigades of the new army.

At either of those places you felt that you were taking part in a crusade. That was the only word for it although it was a word that had been so worn and abused that it no longer gave its true meaning. You felt, in spite of all bureaucracy and inefficiency and party strife, something that was like the feeling you expected to have and did not have when you made your first communion. It was a feeling of consecration to a duty toward all of the oppressed of the world which would be as difficult and embarrassing to speak about as religious experience and yet it was authentic as the feeling you had when you heard Bach, or stood in Chartres Cathedral or the Cathedral at Leon and saw the light coming through the great windows; or when you saw Mantegna and Greco and Brueghel in the Prado. It gave you a part in something that you could believe in wholly and completely and in which you felt an absolute

brotherhood with the others who were engaged in it. It was something that you had never known before but that you had experienced now and you gave such importance to it and the reasons for it that your own death seemed of complete unimportance; only a thing to be avoided because it would interfere with the performance of your duty. But the best thing was that there was something you could do about this feeling and this necessity too. You could fight.

So you fought, he thought. And in the fighting soon there was no purity of feeling for those who survived the fighting and were good at it. Not after the first six months.

The defense of a position or of a city is a part of war in which you can feel that first sort of feeling. The fighting in the Sierras had been that way. They had fought there with the true comradeship of the revolution. Up there when there had been the first necessity for the enforcement of discipline he had approved and understood it. Under the shelling men had been cowards and had run. He had seen them shot and left to swell beside the road, nobody bothering to do more than strip them of their cartridges and their valuables. Taking their cartridges, their boots and their leather coats was right. Taking the valuables was only realistic. It only kept the anarchists from getting them.

It had seemed just and right and necessary that the men who ran were shot. There was nothing wrong about it. Their running was a selfishness. The fascists had attacked and we had stopped them on that slope in the gray rocks, the scrub pines and the gorse of the Guadarrama hillsides. We had held along the road under the bombing from the planes and the shelling when they brought their artillery up and those who were left at the end of that day had counterattacked and driven them back. Later, when they had tried to come down on the left, sifting down between the rocks and through the trees, we had held out in the Sanitarium firing from the windows and the roof although they had passed it on both sides,

and we lived through knowing what it was to be surrounded until the counterattack had cleared them back behind the road again.

In all that, in the fear that dries your mouth and your throat, in the smashed plaster dust and the sudden panic of a wall falling, collapsing in the flash and roar of a shell burst, clearing the gun, dragging those away who had been serving it, lying face downward and covered with rubble, your head behind the shield working on a stoppage, getting the broken case out, straightening the belt again, you now lying straight behind the shield, the gun searching the roadside again; you did the thing there was to do and knew that you were right. You learned the dry-mouthed, fear-purged, purging ecstasy of battle and you fought that summer and that fall for all the poor in the world, against all tyranny, for all the things that you believed and for the new world you had been educated into. You learned that fall, he thought, how to endure and how to ignore suffering in the long time of cold and wetness, of mud and of digging and fortifying. And the feeling of the summer and the fall was buried deep under tiredness, sleepiness, and nervousness and discomfort. But it was still there and all that you went through only served to validate it. It was in those days, he thought, that you had a deep and sound and selfless pride—that would have made you a bloody bore at Gaylord's, he thought suddenly.

No, you would not have been so good at Gaylord's then, he thought. You were too naive. You were in a sort of state of grace. But Gaylord's might not have been the way it was now at that time, either. No, as a matter of fact, it was not that way, he told himself. It was not that way at all. There was not any Gaylord's then.

Karkov had told him about those days. At that time what Russians there were had lived at the Palace Hotel. Robert Jordan had known none of them then. That was before the first *partizan* groups had been formed; before he had met Kashkin or any of the others. Kashkin had been in the north at Irun, at San Sebastian and in the abortive fighting toward Vitoria. He had not arrived in

Madrid until January and while Robert Jordan had fought at Carabanchel and at Usera in those three days when they stopped the right wing of the fascist attack on Madrid and drove the Moors and the *Tercio* back from house to house to clear that battered suburb on the edge of the gray, sun-baked plateau and establish a line of defense along the heights that would protect that corner of the city, Karkov had been in Madrid.

Karkov was not cynical about those times either when he talked. Those were the days they all shared when everything looked lost and each man retained now, better than any citation or decoration, the knowledge of just how he would act when everything looked lost. The government had abandoned the city, taking all the motor cars from the ministry of war in their flight and old Miaja had to ride down to inspect his defensive positions on a bicycle. Robert Jordan did not believe that one. He could not see Miaja on a bicycle even in his most patriotic imagination, but Karkov said it was true. But then he had written it for Russian papers so he probably wanted to believe it was true after writing it.

But there was another story that Karkov had not written. He had three wounded Russians in the Palace Hotel for whom he was responsible. They were two tank drivers and a flyer who were too bad to be moved, and since, at that time, it was of the greatest importance that there should be no evidence of any Russian intervention to justify an open intervention by the fascists, it was Karkov's responsibility that these wounded should not fall into the hands of the fascists in case the city should be abandoned.

In the event the city should be abandoned, Karkov was to poison them to destroy all evidence of their identity before leaving the Palace Hotel. No one could prove from the bodies of three wounded men, one with three bullet wounds in his abdomen, one with his jaw shot away and his vocal cords exposed, one with his femur smashed to bits by a bullet and his hands and face so badly burned that his face was just an eyelash less, eyebrow less, hairless blister

that they were Russians. No one could tell from the bodies of these wounded men he would leave in beds at the Palace, that they were Russians. Nothing proved a naked dead man was a Russian. Your nationality and your politics did not show when you were dead.

Robert Jordan had asked Karkov how he felt about the necessity of performing this act and Karkov had said that he had not looked forward to it. "How were you going to do it?" Robert Jordan had asked him and had added, "You know it isn't so simple just suddenly to poison people." And Karkov had said, "Oh, yes, it is when you carry it always for your own use." Then he had opened his cigarette case and showed Robert Jordan what he carried in one side of it.

"But the first thing anybody would do if they took you prisoner would be to take your cigarette case," Robert Jordan had objected. "They would have your hands up."

"But I have a little more here," Karkov had grinned and showed the lapel of his jacket. "You simply put the lapel in your mouth like this and bite it and swallow."

"That's much better," Robert Jordan had said. "Tell me, does it smell like bitter almonds the way it always does in detective stories?"

"I don't know," Karkov said delightedly. "I have never smelled it. Should we break a little tube and smell it?"

"Better keep it."

"Yes," Karkov said and put the cigarette case away. "I am not a defeatist, you understand, but it is always possible that such serious times might come again and you cannot get this anywhere. Have you seen the communique from the Córdoba front? It is very beautiful. It is now my favorite among all the communiqués."

"What did it say?" Robert Jordan had come to Madrid from the Córdoban Front and he had the sudden stiffening that comes when some one jokes about a thing which you yourself may joke about but which they may not. "Tell me?"

“Nuestra gloriosa tropa siga avanzando sin perder ni una sola palma de terreno, “ Karkov said in his strange Spanish.

“It didn’t really say that,” Robert Jordan doubted.

“Our glorious troops continue to advance without losing a foot of ground,” Karkov repeated in English. “It is in the communiqué. I will find it for you.”

You could remember the men you knew who died in the fighting around Pozoblanco; but it was a joke at Gaylord›s.

So that was the way it was at Gaylord›s now. Still there had not always been Gaylord›s and if the situation was now one which produced such a thing as Gaylord›s out of the survivors of the early days, he was glad to see Gaylord›s and to know about it. You are a long way from how you felt in the Sierra and at Carabanchel and at Usera, he thought. You corrupt very easily, he thought. But was it corruption or was it merely that you lost the naivete that you started with? Would it not be the same in anything? Who else kept that first chastity of mind about their work that young doctors, young priests, and young soldiers usually started with? The priests certainly kept it, or they got out. I suppose the Nazis keep it, he thought, and the Communists who have a severe enough self-discipline. But look at Karkov.

He never tired of considering the case of Karkov. The last time he had been at Gaylord›s Karkov had been wonderful about a certain British economist who had spent much time in Spain. Robert Jordan had read this man›s writing for years and he had always respected him without knowing anything about him. He had not cared very much for what this man had written about Spain. It was too clear and simple and too open and shut and many of the statistics he knew were faked by wishful thinking. But he thought you rarely cared for journalism written about a country you really knew about and he respected the man for his intentions.

Then he had seen the man, finally, on the afternoon when they had attacked at Carabanchel. They were sitting in the lee of the bull

ring and there was shooting down the two streets and every one was nervous waiting for the attack. A tank had been promised and it had not come up and Montero was sitting with his head in his hand saying, “The tank has not come. The tank has not come.”

It was a cold day and the yellow dust was blowing down the street and Montero had been hit in the left arm and the arm was stiffening. “We have to have a tank,” he said. “We must wait for the tank, but we cannot wait.” His wound was making him sound petulant.

Robert Jordan had gone back to look for the tank which Montero said he thought might have stopped behind the apartment building on the corner of the tram-line. It was there all right. But it was not a tank. Spaniards called anything a tank in those days. It was an old armored car. The driver did not want to leave the angle of the apartment house and bring it up to the bull ring. He was standing behind it with his arms folded against the metal of the car and his head in the leather-padded helmet on his arms. He shook his head when Robert Jordan spoke to him and kept it pressed against his arms. Then he turned his head without looking at Robert Jordan.

“I have no orders to go there,” he said sullenly.

Robert Jordan had taken his pistol out of the holster and pushed the muzzle of the pistol against the leather coat of the armored car driver.

“Here are your orders,” he had told him. The man shook his head with the big padded-leather helmet like a football player›s on it and said, “There is no ammunition for the machine gun.”

“We have ammunition at the bull ring,” Robert Jordan had told him. “Come on, let›s go. We will fill the belts there. Come on.”

“There is no one to work the gun,” the driver said.

“Where is he? Where is your mate?”

“Dead,” the driver had said. “Inside there.”

“Get him out,” Robert Jordan had said. “Get him out of there.”

“I do not like to touch him,” the driver had said. “And he is bent over between the gun and the wheel and I cannot get past him.”

“Come on,” Robert Jordan had said. “We will get him out together.”

He had banged his head as he climbed into the armored car and it had made a small cut over his eyebrow that bled down onto his face. The dead man was heavy and so stiff you could not bend him and he had to hammer at his head to get it out from where it had wedged, face down, between his seat and the wheel. Finally he got it up by pushing with his knee up under the dead man›s head and then, pulling back on the man›s waist now that the head was loose, he pulled the dead man out himself toward the door.

“Give me a hand with him,” he had said to the driver.

“I do not want to touch him,” the driver had said and Robert Jordan had seen that he was crying. The tears ran straight down on each side of his nose on the powder-grimed slope of his face and his nose was running, too.

Standing beside the door he had swung the dead man out and the dead man fell onto the sidewalk beside the tram-line still in that hunched-over, doubled-up position. He lay there, his face waxy gray against the cement sidewalk, his hands bent under him as they had been in the car.

“Get in, God damn it,” Robert Jordan had said, motioning now with his pistol to the driver. “Get in there now.”

Just then he had seen this man who had come out from the lee of the apartment house building. He had on a long overcoat and he was bareheaded and his hair was gray, his cheekbones broad and his eyes were deep and set close together. He had a package of Chesterfields in his hand and he took one out and handed it toward Robert Jordan who was pushing the driver into the armored car with his pistol.

“Just a minute, Comrade,” he had said to Robert Jordan in Spanish. “Can you explain to me something about the fighting?”

Robert Jordan took the cigarette and put it in the breast pocket of his blue mechanic jumper. He had recognized this comrade from his pictures. It was the British economist.

"Go muck yourself," he said in English and then, in Spanish, to the armored car driver. "Down there. The bull ring. See?" And he had pulled the heavy side door to with a slam and locked it and they had started down that long slope in the car and the bullets had commenced to hit against the car, sounding like pebbles tossed against an iron boiler. Then when the machine gun opened on them, they were like sharp hammer tappings. They had pulled up behind the shelter of the bull ring with the last October posters still pasted up beside the ticket window and the ammunition boxes knocked open and the comrades with the rifles, the grenades on their belts and in their pockets, waiting there in the lee and Montero had said, "Good. Here is the tank. Now we can attack."

Later that night when they had the last houses on the hill, he lay comfortable behind a brick wall with a hole knocked in the bricks for a loophole and looked across the beautiful level field of fire they had between them and the ridge the fascists had retired to and thought, with a comfort that was almost voluptuous, of the rise of the hill with the smashed villa that protected the left flank. He had lain in a pile of straw in his sweat-soaked clothes and wound a blanket around him while he dried. Lying there he thought of the economist and laughed, and then felt sorry he had been rude. But at the moment, when the man had handed him the cigarette, pushing it out almost like offering a tip for information, the combatant›s hatred for the noncombatant had been too much for him.

Now he remembered Gaylord›s and Karkov speaking of this same man. "So it was there you met him," Karkov had said. "I did not get farther than the Puente de Toledo myself on that day. He was very far toward the front. That was the last day of his bravery I believe. He left Madrid the next day. Toledo was where he was the bravest, I believe. At Toledo he was enormous. He was one of the

architects of our capture of the Alcazar. You should have seen him at Toledo. I believe it was largely through his efforts and his advice that our siege was successful. That was the silliest part of the war. It reached an ultimate in silliness but tell me, what is thought of him in America?"

"In America," Robert Jordan said, "he is supposed to be very close to Moscow."

"He is not," said Karkov. "But he has a wonderful face and his face and his manners are very successful. Now with my face I could do nothing. What little I have accomplished was all done in spite of my face which does not either inspire people nor move them to love me and to trust me. But this man Mitchell has a face he makes his fortune with. It is the face of a conspirator. All who have read of conspirators in books trust him instantly. Also he has the true manner of the conspirator. Anyone seeing him enter a room knows that he is instantly in the presence of a conspirator of the first mark. All of your rich compatriots who wish sentimentally to aid the Soviet Union as they believe or to insure themselves a little against any eventual success of the party see instantly in the face of this man, and in his manner that he can be none other than a trusted agent of the Comintern."

"Has he no connections in Moscow?"

"None. Listen, Comrade Jordan. Do you know about the two kinds of fools?"

"Plain and damn?"

"No. The two kinds of fools we have in Russia," Karkov grinned and began. "First there is the winter fool. The winter fool comes to the door of your house and he knocks loudly. You go to the door and you see him there and you have never seen him before. He is an impressive sight. He is a very big man and he has on high boots and a fur coat and a fur hat and he is all covered with snow. First he stamps his boots and snow falls from them. Then he takes off his fur coat and shakes it and more snow falls. Then he takes off his fur

hat and knocks it against the door. More snow falls from his fur hat. Then he stamps his boots again and advances into the room. Then you look at him and you see he is a fool. That is the winter fool.

"Now in the summer you see a fool going down the street and he is waving his arms and jerking his head from side to side and everybody from two hundred yards away can tell he is a fool. That is a summer fool. This economist is a winter fool."

"But why do people trust him here?" Robert Jordan asked.

"His face," Karkov said. "His beautiful *gueule de conspirateur*. And his invaluable trick of just having come from somewhere else where he is very trusted and important. Of course," he smiled, "he must travel very much to keep the trick working. You know the Spanish are very strange," Karkov went on. "This government has had much money. Much gold. They will give nothing to their friends. You are a friend. All right. You will do it for nothing and should not be rewarded. But to people representing an important firm or a country which is not friendly but must be influencedto such people they give much. It is very interesting when you follow it closely."

"I do not like it. Also that money belongs to the Spanish workers."

"You are not supposed to like things. Only to understand," Karkov had told him. "I teach you a little each time I see you and eventually you will acquire an education. It would be very interesting for a professor to be educated."

"I don't know whether I'll be able to be a professor when I get back. They will probably run me out as a Red."

"Well, perhaps you will be able to come to the Soviet Union and continue your studies there. That might be the best thing for you to do."

"But Spanish is my field."

"There are many countries where Spanish is spoken," Karkov had said. "They cannot all be as difficult to do anything with as

Spain is. Then you must remember that you have not been a professor now for almost nine months. In nine months you may have learned a new trade. How much dialectics have you read?"

"I have read the Handbook of Marxism that Emil Burns edited. That is all."

"If you have read it all that is quite a little. There are fifteen hundred pages and you could spend some time on each page. But there are some other things you should read."

"There is no time to read now."

"I know," Karkov had said. "I mean eventually. There are many things to read which will make you understand some of these things that happen. But out of this will come a book which is very necessary; which will explain many things which it is necessary to know. Perhaps I will write it. I hope that it will be me who will write it."

"I don't know who could write it better."

"Do not flatter," Karkov had said. "I am a journalist. But like all journalists I wish to write literature. Just now, I am very busy on a study of Calvo Sotelo. He was a very good fascist; a true Spanish fascist. Franco and these other people are not. I have been studying all of Sotelo's writing and speeches. He was very intelligent and it was very intelligent that he was killed."

"I thought that you did not believe in political assassination."

"It is practised very extensively," Karkov said. "Very, very extensively."

"But—"

"We do not believe in acts of terrorism by individuals," Karkov had smiled. "Not of course by criminal terrorist and counterrevolutionary organizations. We detest with horror the duplicity and villainy of the murderous hyenas of Bukharinite wreckers and such dregs of humanity as Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov and their henchmen. We hate and loathe these veritable fiends," he smiled again. "But I still believe that political assassination can be

said to be practised very extensively."

"You mean—"

"I mean nothing. But certainly we execute and destroy such veritable fiends and dregs of humanity and the treacherous dogs of generals and the revolting spectacle of admirals unfaithful to their trust. These are destroyed. They are not assassinated. You see the difference?"

"I see," Robert Jordan had said.

"And because I make jokes sometime: and you know how dangerous it is to make jokes even in joke? Good. Because I make jokes, do not think that the Spanish people will not live to regret that they have not shot certain generals that even now hold commands. I do not like the shootings, you understand."

"I don't mind them," Robert Jordan said. "I do not like them but I do not mind them any more."

"I know that," Karkov had said. "I have been told that."

"Is it important?" Robert Jordan said. "I was only trying to be truthful about it."

"It is regretful," Karkov had said. "But it is one of the things that makes people be treated as reliable who would ordinarily have to spend much more time before attaining that category."

"Am I supposed to be reliable?"

"In your work you are supposed to be very reliable. I must talk to you sometime to see how you are in your mind. It is regrettable that we never speak seriously."

"My mind is in suspension until we win the war," Robert Jordan had said.

"Then perhaps you will not need it for a long time. But you should be careful to exercise it a little."

"I read *Mundo Obrero,"* Robert Jordan had told him and Karkov had said, "All right. Good. I can take a joke too. But there are very intelligent things in *Mundo Obrero.* The only intelligent things written on this war."

“Yes,” Robert Jordan had said. “I agree with you. But to get a full picture of what is happening you cannot read only the party organ.”

“No,” Karkov had said. “But you will not find any such picture if you read twenty papers and then, if you had it, I do not know what you would do with it. I have such a picture almost constantly and what I do is try to forget it.”

“You think it is that bad?”

“It is better now than it was. We are getting rid of some of the worst. But it is very rotten. We are building a huge army now and some of the elements, those of Modesto, ofEl Campesino, of Lister and of Duran, are reliable. They are more than reliable. They are magnificent. You will see that. Also we still have the Brigades although their role is changing. But an army that is made up of good and bad elements cannot win a war. All must be brought to a certain level of political development; all must know why they are fighting, and its importance. All must believe in the fight they are to make and all must accept discipline. We are making a huge conscript army without the time to implant the discipline that a conscript army must have, to behave properly under fire. We call it a people’s army but it will not have the assets of a true people’s army and it will not have the iron discipline that a conscript army needs. You will see. It is a very dangerous procedure.”

“You are not very cheerful today.”

“No,” Karkov had said. “I have just come back from Valencia where I have seen many people. No one comes back very cheerful from Valencia. In Madrid you feel good and clean and with no possibility of anything but winning. Valencia is something else. The cowards who fled from Madrid still govern there. They have settled happily into the sloth and bureaucracy of governing. They have only contempt for those of Madrid. Their obsession now is the weakening of the commissariat for war. And Barcelona. You should see Barcelona.”

“How is it?”

“It is all still comic opera. First it was the paradise of the crackpots and the romantic revolutionists. Now it is the paradise of the fake soldier. The soldiers who like to wear uniforms, who like to strut and swagger and wear red-and-black scarves. Who like everything about war except to fight. Valencia makes you sick and Barcelona makes you laugh.”

“What about the P. O. U. M. putsch?”

“The P. O. U. M. was never serious. It was a heresy of crackpots and wild men and it was really just an infantilism. There were some honest misguided people. There was one fairly good brain and there was a little fascist money. Not much. The poor P. O. U. M. They were very silly people.”

“But were many killed in the putsch?”

“Not so many as were shot afterwards or will be shot. The P. O. U. M. It is like the name. Not serious. They should have called it the M. U. M. P. S. or the M. E. A. S. L. E. S. But no. The Measles is much more dangerous. It can affect both sight and hearing. But they made one plot you know to kill me, to kill Walter, to kill Modesto and to kill Prieto. You see how badly mixed up they were? We are not at all alike. Poor P. O. U. M. They never did kill anybody. Not at the front nor anywhere else. A few in Barcelona, yes.”

“Were you there?”

“Yes. I have sent a cable describing the wickedness of that infamous organization of Trotskyite murderers and their fascist machinations all beneath contempt but, between us, it is not very serious, the P. O. U. M. Nin was their only man. We had him but he escaped from our hands.”

“Where is he now?”

“In Paris. We say he is in Paris. He was a very pleasant fellow but with bad political aberrations.”

“But they were in communication with the fascists, weren’t they?”

"Who is not?"

"We are not."

"Who knows? I hope we are not. You go often behind their lines," he grinned. "But the brother of one of the secretaries of the Republican Embassy at Paris made a trip to St. Jean de Luz last week to meet people from Burgos."

"I like it better at the front," Robert Jordan had said. "The closer to the front the better the people."

"How do you like it behind the fascist lines?"

"Very much. We have fine people there."

"Well, you see they must have their fine people behind our lines the same way. We find them and shoot them and they find ours and shoot them. When you are in their country you must always think of how many people they must send over to us."

"I have thought about them."

"Well," Karkov had said. "You have probably enough to think about for today, so drink that beer that is left in the pitcher and run along now because I have to go upstairs to see people. Upstairs people. Come again to see me soon."

Yes, Robert Jordan thought. You learned a lot at Gaylord's. Karkov had read the one and only book he had published. The book had not been a success. It was only two hundred pages long and he doubted if two thousand people had ever read it. He had put in it what he had discovered about Spain in ten years of travelling in it, on foot, in third-class carriages, by bus, on horse- and mule-back and in trucks. He knew the Basque country, Navarre, Aragon, Galicia, the two Cas tiles and Estremadura well. There had been such good books written by Borrow and Ford and the rest that he had been able to add very little. But Karkov said it was a good book.

"It is why I bother with you," he said. "I think you write absolutely truly and that is very rare. So I would like you to know some things."

All right. He would write a book when he got through with this. But only about the things he knew, truly, and about what he knew. But I will have to be a much better writer than I am now to handle them, he thought. The things he had come to know in this war were not so simple.

Chapter Nineteen

"What do you do sitting there?" Maria asked him. She was standing close beside him and he turned his head and smiled at her.

"Nothing," he said. "I have been thinking."

"What of? The bridge?"

"No. The bridge is terminated. Of thee and of a hotel in Madrid where I know some Russians, and of a book I will write some time."

"Are there many Russians in Madrid?"

"No. Very few."

"But in the fascist periodicals it says there are hundreds of thousands."

"Those are lies. There are very few."

"Do you like the Russians? The one who was here was a Russian."

"Did you like him?"

"Yes. I was sick then but I thought he was very beautiful and very brave."

"What nonsense, beautiful," Pilar said. "His nose was flat as my hand and he had cheekbones as wide as a sheep's buttocks."

"He was a good friend and comrade of mine," Robert Jordan said to Maria. "I cared for him very much."

"Sure," Pilar said. "But you shot him."

When she said this the card players looked up from the table and Pablo stared at Robert Jordan. Nobody said anything and then the gypsy, Rafael, asked, "Is it true, Roberto?"

"Yes," Robert Jordan said. He wished Pilar had not brought this up and he wished he had not told it at El Sordo's. "At his request.

He was badly wounded."

"Qué cosa mas rara," the gypsy said. "All the time he was with us he talked of such a possibility. I don't know how many times I have promised him to perform such an act. What a rare thing," he said again and shook his head.

"He was a very rare man," Primitivo said. "Very singular."

"Look," Andrés, one of the brothers, said. "You who are Professor and all. Do you believe in the possibility of a man seeing ahead what is to happen to him?"

"I believe he cannot see it," Robert Jordan said. Pablo was staring at him curiously and Pilar was watching him with no expression on her face. "In the case of this Russian comrade he was very nervous from being too much time at the front. He had fought at Irun which, you know, was bad. Very bad. He had fought later in the north. And since the first groups who did this work behind the lines were formed he had worked here, in Estremadura and in Andaluda. I think he was very tired and nervous and he imagined ugly things."

"He would undoubtedly have seen many evil things," Fernando said.

"Like all the world," Andrés said. "But listen to me, *Inglés.* Do you think there is such a thing as a man knowing in advance what will befall him?"

"No," Robert Jordan said. "That is ignorance and superstition."

"Go on," Pilar said. "Let us hear the viewpoint of the professor." She spoke as though she were talking to a precocious child.

"I believe that fear produces evil visions," Robert Jordan said.

"Seeing bad signs—"

"Such as the airplanes today," Primitivo said.

"Such as thy arrival," Pablo said softly and Robert Jordan looked across the table at him, saw it was not a provocation but only an expressed thought, then went on. "Seeing bad signs, one, with fear, imagines an end for himself and one thinks that imagining comes

by divination," Robert Jordan concluded. "I believe there is nothing more to it than that. I do not believe in ogres, nor soothsayers, nor in the supernatural things."

"But this one with the rare name saw his fate clearly," the gypsy said. "And that was how it happened."

"He did not see it," Robert Jordan said. "He had a fear of such a possibility and it became an obsession. No one can tell me that he saw anything."

"Not I?" Pilar asked him and picked some dust up from the fire and blew it off the palm of her hand. "I cannot tell thee either?"

"No. With all wizardry, gypsy and all, thou canst not tell me either."

"Because thou art a miracle of deafness," Pilar said, her big face harsh and broad in the candlelight. "It is not that thou art stupid. Thou art simply deaf. One who is deaf cannot hear music. Neither can he hear the radio. So he might say, never having heard them, that such things do not exist. *Qué va, Inglés.* I saw the death of that one with the rare name in his face as though it were burned there with a branding iron."

"You did not," Robert Jordan insisted. "You saw fear and apprehension. The fear was made by what he had been through. The apprehension was for the possibility of evil he imagined."

"Qué va," Pilar said. "I saw death there as plainly as though it were sitting on his shoulder. And what is more he smelt of death."

"He smelt of death," Robert Jordan jeered. "Of fear maybe. There is a smell to fear."

"De la muerte," Pilar said. "Listen. When Blanguet, who was the greatest *peon de brega* who ever lived, worked under the orders of Granero he told me that on the day of Manolo Granero's death, when they stopped in the chapel on the way to the ring, the odor of death was so strong on Manolo that it almost made B1anguet sick. And he had been with Manolo when he had bathed and dressed at the hotel before setting out for the ring. The odor was not present in

the motorcar when they had sat packed tight together riding to the bull ring. Nor was it distinguishable to any one else but Juan Luis de la Rosa in the chapel. Neither Marcial nor Chicuelo smelled it neither then nor when the four of them lined up for the paseo. But Juan Luis was dead white, Blanguet told me, and he, B1anguet, spoke to him saying, 'Thou also?'

" 'So that I cannot breathe,' Juan Luis said to him. 'And from thy matador.'

" 'Pucs nada,' B1anguet said. 'There is nothing to do. Let us hope we are mistaken.'

" 'And the others?' Juan Luis asked Blanguet.

'"Nada,' Blanguet said. 'Nothing. But this one stinks worse than José at Talavera.'

"And it was on that afternoon that the bull *Pocapena* of the ranch of Veragua destroyed Manolo Granero against the planks of the barrier in front of *tendido* two in the Plaza de Toros of Madrid. I was there with Finito and I saw it. The horn entirely destroyed the cranium, the head of Manolo being wedged under the *estribo* at the base of the *barrera* where the bull had tossed him."

"But did you smell anything?" Fernando asked.

"Nay," Pilar said. "I was too far away. We were in the seventh row of the *ten dido* three. It was thus, being at an angle, that I could see all that happened. But that same night Blanquet who had been under the orders of [oselito when he too was ki\1ed told Finito about it at Fornos, and Finito asked Juan Luis de la Rosa and he would say nothing. But he nodded his head that it was true. I was present when this happened. So, *Inglés,* it may be that thou art deaf to some things as Chicuelo and Marcial Lalanda and all of their *banderilleros* and picadors and all of the *gente* of Juan Luis and Manolo Granero were deaf to this thing on this day. But Juan Luis and Blanquet were not deaf. Nor am I deaf to such things."

"Why do you say deaf when it is a thing of the nose?" Fernando asked.

"Lecher Pilar said. "Thou shouldst be the professor in place of the *Inglés.* But I could tell thee of other things, *Inglés,* and do not doubt what thou simply cannot see nor cannot hear. Thou canst not hear what a dog hears. Nor canst thou smell what a dog smells. But already thou hast experienced a little of what can happen to man."

Maria put her hand on Robert Jordan's shoulder and let it rest there and he thought suddenly, let us finish all this nonsense and take advantage of what time we have. But it is too early yet. We have to kill this part of the evening. So he said to Pablo, "Thou, believest thou in this wizardry?"

"I do not know," Pablo said. "I am more of thy opinion. No supernatural thing has ever happened to me. But fear, yes certainly. Plenty. But I believe that the Pilar can divine events from the hand. If she does not lie perhaps it is true that she has smelt such a thing."

"Qué va that I should lie," Pilar said. "This is not a thing of my invention. This man Blanquet was a man of extreme seriousness and furthermore very devout. He was no gypsy but a bourgeois from Valencia. Hast thou never seen him?"

"Yes," Robert Jordan said. "I have seen him many times. He was small, gray-faced and no one handled a cape better. He was quick on his feet as a rabbit."

"Exactly," Pilar said. "He had a gray face from heart trouble and gypsies said that he carried death with him but that he could flick it away with a cape as you might dust a table. Yet he, who was no gypsy, smelled death on Joselito when he fought at Talavera. Although I do not see how he could smell it above the sme\1 of manzanilla. Blanquet spoke of this afterwards with much diffidence but those to whom he spoke said that it was a fantasy and that what he had smelled was the life that José led at that time coming out in sweat from his armpits. But then, later, came this of Manolo Granero in which Juan Luis de la Rosa also participated. Clearly Juan Luis was a man of very little honor, but of much sensitiveness in his work and he was also a great layer of women. But Blanquet

was serious and very quiet and completely incapable of telling an untruth. And I tell you that I smelled death on your colleague who was here."

"I do not believe it," Robert Jordan said. "Also you said that Blanquet smelled this just before the paseo. Just before the bullfight started. Now this was a successful action here of you and Kashkin and the train. He was not killed in that. How could you smell it then?"

"That has nothing to do with it," Pilar explained. "In the last season of Ignacio Sanchez Mejias he smelled so strongly of death that many refused to sit with him in the cafe. All gypsies knew of this."

"After the death such things are invented," Robert Jordan argued.

"Everyone knew that Sanchez Mejias was on the road to a *cornada* because he had been too long out of training, because his style was heavy and dangerous, and because his strength and the agility in his legs were gone and his reflexes no longer as they had been."

"Certainly," Pilar told him. "A\1 of that is true. But all the gypsies knew also that he smelled of death and when he would come into the Villa Rosa you would see such people as Ricardo and Felipe González leaving by the small door behind the bar."

"They probably owed him money," Robert Jordan said.

"It is possible," Pilar said. "Very possible. But they also smelled the thing and all knew of it."

"What she says is true, *Inglés,"* the gypsy, Rafael, said. "It is a well-known thing among us."

"I believe nothing of it," Robert Jordan said.

"Listen, *Inglés,"* Anselmo began. "I am against all such WIZardry. But this Pilar has the fame of being very advanced in such things."

"But what does it smell like?" Fernando asked. "What odor has it? If there be an odor it must be a definite odor."

"You want to know, Fernandito?" Pilar smiled at him. "You think that you could smell it?"

"If it actually exists why should I not smell it as well as another?"

"Why not?" Pilar was making fun of him, her big hands folded across her knees. "Hast thou ever been aboard a ship, Fernando?"

"Nay. And I would not wish to."

"Then thou might not recognize it. For part of it is the smell that comes when, on a ship, there is a storm and the portholes are closed up. Put your nose against the brass handle of a screwedtight porthole on a rolling ship that is swaying under you so that you are faint and hollow in the stomach and you have a part of that smell."

"It would be impossible for me to recognize because I will go on no ship," Fernando said.

"I have been on ships several times," Pilar said. "Both to go to Mexico and to Venezuela."

"What's the rest of it?" Robert Jordan asked. Pilar looked at him mockingly, remembering now, proudly, her voyages.

"All right, *Inglés.* Learn. That's the thing. Learn. All right. After that of the ship you must go down the hill in Madrid to the Puente de Toledo early in the morning to the *matadero* and stand there on the wet paving when there is a fog from the Manzanares and wait for the old women who go before daylight to drink the blood of the beasts that are slaughtered. When such an old woman comes out of the *matadero,* holding her shawl around her, with her face gray and her eyes hollow, and the whiskers of age on her chin, and on her cheeks, set in the waxen white of her face as the sprouts grow from the seed of the bean, not bristles, but pale sprouts in the death of her face; put your arms tight around her, *Inglés,* and hold her to you and kiss her on the mouth and you will know the second part that odor is made of."

"That one has taken my appetite," the gypsy said. "That of the sprouts was too much."

“Do you want to hear some more?” Pilar asked Robert Jordan.

“Surely,” he said. “If it is necessary for one to learn let us learn.”

“That of the sprouts in the face of the old women sickens me,” the gypsy said. “Why should that occur in old women, Pilar? With us it is not so.”

“Nay,” Pilar mocked at him. “With us the old woman, who was so slender in her youth, except of course for the perpetual bulge that is the mark of her husband’s favor, that every gypsy pushes always before her—”

“Do not speak thus,” Rafael said. “It is ignoble.”

“So thou art hurt,” Pilar said. “Hast thou ever seen a *gitana* who was not about to have, or just to have had, a child?”

“Thou.”

“Leave it,” Pilar said. “There is no one who cannot be hurt. What I was saying is that age brings its own form of ugliness to all. There is no need to detail it. But if the *Inglés* must learn that odor that he covets to recognize he must go to the *matadero* early in the morning.”

“I will go,” Robert Jordan said. “But I will get the odor as they pass without kissing one. I fear the sprouts, too, as Rafael does.”

“Kiss one,” Pilar said. “Kiss one, *Inglés,* for thy knowledge’s sake and then, with this in thy nostrils, walk back up into the city and when thou seest a refuse pail with dead flowers in it plunge thy nose deep into it and inhale so that scent mixes with those thou hast already in thy nasal passages.”

“Now have I done it,” Robert Jordan said. “What Rowers were they?”

“Chrysanthemums.”

“Continue,” Robert Jordan said. “I smell them.”

“Then,” Pilar went on, “it is important that the day be in autumn with rain, or at least some fog, or early winter even and now thou shouldst continue to walk through the city and down the Calle de Salud smelling what thou wilt smell where they are

sweeping out the *casas de putas* and emptying the slop jars into the drains and, with this odor of love's labor lost mixed sweetly with soapy water and cigarette butts only faintly reaching thy nostrils, thou shouldst go on to the Jardin Botanico where at night those girls who can no longer work in the houses do their work against the iron gates of the park and the iron picketed fences and upon the sidewalks. It is there in the shadow of the trees against the iron railings that they will perform all that a man wishes; from the simplest requests at a remuneration of ten centimos up to a peseta for that great act that we are born to and there, on a dead Rower bed that has not yet been plucked out and replanted, and so serves to soften the earth that is so much softer than the sidewalk, thou wilt find an abandoned gunny sack with the odor of the wet earth, the dead Rowers, and the doings of that night. In this sack will be contained the essence of it all, both the dead earth and the dead stalks of the Rowers and their rotted blooms and the smell that is both the death and birth of man. Thou wilt wrap this sack around thy head and try to breathe through it."

"No,"

"Yes," Pilar said. "Thou wilt wrap this sack around thy head and try to breathe and then, if thou hast not lost any of the previous odors, when thou inhalest deeply, thou wilt smell the odor of death-to-come as we know it."

"All right," Robert Jordan said. "And you say Kashkin smelt like that when he was here?"

"Yes."

"Well," said Robert Jordan gravely. "If that is true it is a good thing that I shot him."

"Olé, " the gypsy said. The others laughed.

"Very good," Primitivo approved. "That should hold her for a while."

"But Pilar," Fernando said. "Surely you could not expect one of Don Roberto's education to do such vile things."

“No,” Pilar agreed.

“All of that is of the utmost repugnance.”

“Yes,” Pilar agreed.

“You would not expect him actually to perform those degrading acts? “

“No,” Pilar said. “Go to bed, will you?”

“But, Pilar—” Fernando went on.

“Shut up, will you?” Pilar said to him suddenly and viciously. “Do not make a fool of thyself and I will try not to make a fool of myself talking with people who cannot understand what one speaks of.”

“I confess I do not understand,” Fernando began.

“Don’t confess and don’t try to understand,” Pilar said. “Is it still snowing outside?”

Robert Jordan went to the mouth of the cave, lifted the blanket and looked out. It was clear and cold in the night outside and no snow was falling. He looked through the tree trunks where the whiteness lay and up through the trees to where the sky was now clear. The air came into his lungs sharp and cold as he breathed.

“El Sordo will leave plenty of tracks if he has stolen horses tonight,” he thought.

He dropped the blanket and came back into the smoky cave. “It is clear,” he said. “The storm is over.”

Chapter Twenty

Now in the night he lay and waited for the girl to come to him. There was no wind now and the pines were still in the night. The trunks of the pines projected from the snow that covered all the ground, and he lay in the robe feeling the suppleness of the bed under him that he had made, his legs stretched long against the warmth of the robe, the air sharp and cold on his head and in his nostrils as he breathed. Under his head, as he lay on his side, was the bulge of the trousers and the coat that he had wrapped around his shoes to make a pillow and against his side was the cold metal of the big automatic pistol he had taken from the holster when he undressed and fastened by its lanyard to his right wrist. He pushed the pistol away and settled deeper into the robe as he watched, across the snow, the dark break in the rocks that was the entrance to the cave. The sky was clear and there was enough light reflected from the snow to see the trunks of the trees and the bulk of the rocks where the cave was.

Earlier in the evening he had taken the ax and gone outside of the cave and walked through the new snow to the edge of the clearing and cut down a small spruce tree. In the dark he had dragged it, butt first, to the lee of the rock wall. There close to the rock, he had held the tree upright, holding the trunk firm with one hand, and, holding the ax-haft close to the head had lopped off all the boughs until he had a pile of them. Then, leaving the pile of boughs, he had laid the bare pole of the trunk down in the snow and gone into the cave to get a slap of wood he had seen against the wall. With this slab he scraped the ground clear of the snow along

the rock wall and then picked up his boughs and shaking them clean of snow laid them in rows, like over-lapping plumes, until he had a bed. He put the pole across the foot of the bough bed to hold the branches in place and pegged it firm with two pointed pieces of wood he split from the edge of the slab.

Then he carried the slab and the ax back into the cave, ducking under the blanket as he came in, and leaned them both against the wall.

"What do you do outside?" Pilar had asked.

"I made a bed."

"Don't cut pieces from my new shelf for thy bed."

"I am sorry."

"It has no importance," she said. "There are more slabs at the sawmill. What sort of bed hast thou made?"

"As in my country."

"Then sleep well on it," she had said and Robert Jordan had opened one of the packs and pulled the robe out and replaced those things wrapped in it back in the pack and carried the robe out, ducking under the blanket again, and spread it over the boughs so that the closed end of the robe was against the pole that was pegged cross-wise at the foot of the bed. The open head of the robe was protected by the rock wall of the cliff. Then he went back into the cave for his packs but Pilar said, "They can sleep with me as last night."

"Will you not have sentries?" he asked. "The night is clear and the storm is over."

"Fernando goes," Pilar said.

Maria was in the back of the cave and Robert Jordan could not see her.

"Good night to everyone," he had said. "I am going to sleep."

Of the others, who were laying out blankets and bedrolls on the floor in front of the cooking fire, pushing back the slab tables and the rawhide-covered stools to make sleeping space, Primitivo and

Andrés looked up and said, *"Buenas naches."*

Anselmo was already asleep in a corner, rolled in his blanket and his cape, not even his nose showing. Pablo was asleep in his chair.

"Do you want a sheep hide for thy bed?" Pilar asked Robert Jordan softly.

"Nay," he said. "Thank thee. I do not need it."

"Sleep well," she said. "I will respond for thy material."

Fernando had gone out with him and stood a moment where Robert Jordan had spread the sleeping robe.

"You have a curious idea to sleep in the open, Don Roberto," he said standing there in the dark, muffled in his blanket cape, his carbine slung over his shoulder.

"I am accustomed to it. Good night."

"Since you are accustomed to it."

"When are you relieved?"

"At four."

"There is much cold between now and then."

"I am accustomed to it," Fernando said.

"Since, then, you are accustomed to it-" Robert Jordan said politely.

"Yes," Fernando agreed. "Now I must get up there. Good night, Don Roberto."

"Good night, Fernando."

Then he had made a pillow of the things he took off and gotten into the robe and then lain and waited, feeling the spring of the boughs under the flannelly, feathered lightness of the robe warmth, watching the mouth of the cave across the snow; feeling his heart beat as he waited.

The night was clear and his head felt as clear and cold as the air. He smelled the odor of the pine boughs under him, the piney smell of the crushed needles and the sharper odor of the resinous sap from the cut limbs. Pilar, he thought. Pilar and the smell of death.

This is the smell I love. This and fresh-cut clover, the crushed sage as you ride after cattle, wood-smoke and the burning leaves of autumn. That must be the odor of nostalgia, the smell of the smoke from the piles of raked leaves burning in the streets in the fall in Missoula. Which would you rather smell? Sweet grass the Indians used in their baskets? Smoked leather? The odor of the ground in the spring after rain? The smell of the sea as you walk through the gorse on a headland in Galicia? Or the wind from the land as you come in toward Cuba in the dark? That was the odor of the cactus flowers, mimosa and the seagrape shrubs. Or would you rather smell frying bacon in the morning when you are hungry? Or coffee in the morning? Or a Jonathan apple as you bit into it? Or a cider mill in the grinding, or bread fresh from the oven? You must be hungry, he thought, and he lay on his side and watched the entrance of the cave in the light that the stars reflected from the snow.

Some one came out from under the blanket and he could see whoever it was standing by the break in the rock that made the entrance. Then he heard a slithering sound in the snow and then whoever it was ducked down and went back in.

I suppose she won't come until they are all asleep, he thought. It is a waste of time. The night is half gone. Oh, Maria. Come now quickly, Maria, for there is little time. He heard the soft sound of snow falling from a branch onto the snow on the ground. A little wind was rising. He felt it on his face. Suddenly he felt a panic that she might not come. The wind rising now reminded him how soon it would be morning. More snow fell from the branches as he heard the wind now moving the pine tops.

Come now, Maria. Please come here now quickly, he thought. Oh, come here now. Do not wait. There is no importance any more to your waiting until they are asleep.

Then he saw her coming out from under the blanket that covered the cave mouth. She stood there a moment and he knew it

was she but he could not see what she was doing. He whistled a low whistle and she was still at the cave mouth doing something in the darkness of the rock shadow. Then she came running, carrying something in her hands and he saw her running longlegged through the snow. Then she was kneeling by the robe, her head pushed hard against him, slapping snow from her feet. She kissed him and handed him her bundle.

"Put it with thy pillow," she said. "I took these off there to save time."

"You came barefoot through the snow?"

"Yes," she said, "and wearing only my wedding shirt."

He held her close and tight in his arms and she rubbed her head against his chin.

"Avoid the feet," she said. "They are very cold, Roberto."

"Put them here and warm them."

"Nay," she said. "They will warm quickly. But say quickly now that you love me."

"I love thee."

"Good. Good. Good."

"I love thee, little rabbit."

"Do you love my wedding shirt?"

"It is the same one as always."

"Yes. As last night. It is my wedding shirt."

"Put thy feet here."

"Nay, that would be abusive. They will warm of themselves. They are warm to me. It is only that the snow has made them cold toward thee. Say it again."

"I love thee, my little rabbit."

"I love thee, too, and I am thy wife."

"Were they asleep?"

"No," she said. "But I could support it no longer. And what importance has it?"

"None," he said, and felt her against him, slim and long and

warmly lovely. “No other thing has importance.”

“Put thy hand on my head,” she said, “and then let me see if I can kiss thee.”

“Was it well?” she asked.

“Yes,” he said. “Take off thy wedding shirt.”

“You think I should?”

“Yes, if thou wilt not be cold.”

“Qué va, cold. I am on fire.”

“I, too. But afterwards thou wilt not be cold?”

“No. Afterwards we will be as one animal of the forest and be so close that neither one can tell that one of us is one and not the other. Can you not feel my heart be your heart?”

“Yes. There is no difference.”

“Now, feel. I am thee and thou art me and all of one is the other. And I love thee, oh, I love thee so. Are you not truly one? Canst thou not feel it?”

“Yes,” he said. “It is true.”

“And feel now. Thou hast no heart but mine.”

“Nor any other legs, nor feet, nor of the body.”

“But we are different,” she said. “I would have us exactly the same.”

“You do not mean that.”

“Yes I do. I do. That is a thing I had to tell thee.”

“You do not mean that.”

“Perhaps I do not,” she said speaking softly with her lips against his shoulder. “But I wished to say it. Since we are different I am glad that thou art Roberto and I Maria. But if thou should ever wish to change I would be glad to change. I would be thee because I love thee so.”

“I do not wish to change. It is better to be one and each one to be the one he is.”

“But we will be one now and there will never be a separate one.” Then she said, “I will be thee when thou are not there. Oh, I

love thee so and I must care well for thee."

"Maria."

"Yes."

"Maria."

"Yes."

"Maria."

"Oh, yes. Please."

"Art thou not cold?"

"Oh, no. Pull the robe over thy shoulders."

"Maria."

"I cannot speak."

"Oh, Maria. Maria. Maria."

Then afterwards, close, with the night cold outside, in the long warmth of the robe, her head touching his cheek, she lay quiet and happy against him and then said softly, "And thou?"

"Como tu," he said.

"Yes," she said. "But it was not as this afternoon."

"No."

"But I loved it more. One does not need to die."

"Ojala no," he said. "I hope not."

"I did not mean that."

"I know. I know what thou meanest. We mean the same."

"Then why did you say that instead of what I meant?"

"With a man there is a difference."

"Then I am glad that we are different."

"And so am I," he said. "But I understood about the dying. I only spoke thus, as a man, from habit. I feel the same as thee."

"However thou art and however thou speakest is how I would have thee be."

"And I love thee and I love thy name, Maria."

"It is a common name."

"No," he said. "It is not common."

"Now should we sleep?" she said. "I could sleep easily."

“Let us sleep,” he said, and he felt the long light body, warm against him, comforting against him, abolishing loneliness against him, magically, by a simple touching of flanks, of shoulders and of feet, making an alliance against death with him, and he said, “Sleep well, little long rabbit.”

She said, “I am asleep already.”

“I am going to sleep,” he said. “Sleep well, beloved.” Then he was asleep and happy as he slept.

But in the night he woke and held her tight as though she were all of life and it was being taken from him. He held her feeling she was all of life there was and it was true. But she was sleeping well and soundly and she did not wake. So he rolled away onto his side and pulled the robe over her head and kissed her once on her neck under the robe and then pulled the pistol lanyard up and put the pistol by his side where he could reach it handily and then he lay there in the night thinking.

Chapter Twenty-One

A warm wind came with daylight and he could hear the snow melting in the trees and the heavy sound of its falling. It was a late spring morning. He knew with the first breath he drew that the snow had been only a freak storm in the mountains and it would be gone by noon. Then he heard a horse coming, the hoofs balled with the wet snow thumping dully as the horseman trotted. He heard the noise of a carbine scabbard slapping loosely and the creak of leather.

"Maria," he said, and shook the girl's shoulder to waken her. "Keep thyself under the robe," and he buttoned his shirt with one hand and held the automatic pistol in the other, loosening the safety catch with his thumb. He saw the girl's cropped head disappear with a jerk under the robe and then he saw the horseman coming through the trees. He crouched now in the robe and holding the pistol in both hands aimed it at the man as he rode toward him. He had never seen this man before.

The horseman was almost opposite him now. He was riding a big gray gelding and he wore a khaki beret, a blanket cape like a poncho, and heavy black boots. From the scabbard on the right of his saddle projected the stock and the long oblong clip of a short automatic rifle. He had a young, hard face and at this moment he saw Robert Jordan.

He reached his hand down toward the scabbard and as he swung low, turning and jerking at the scabbard, Robert Jordan saw the scarlet of the formalized device he wore on the left breast of his khaki blanket cape.

Aiming at the center of his chest, a little lower than the device, Robert Jordan fired.

The pistol roared in the snowy woods.

The horse plunged as though he had been spurred and the young man, still tugging at the scabbard, slid over toward the ground, his right foot caught in the stirrup. The horse broke off through the trees dragging him, bumping, face downward, and Robert Jordan stood up holding the pistol now in one hand.

The big gray horse was galloping through the pines. There was a broad swath in the snow where the man dragged with a scarlet streak along one side of it. People were coming out of the mouth of the cave. Robert Jordan reached down and unrolled his trousers from the pillow and began to put them on.

"Get thee dressed," he said to Maria.

Overhead he heard the noise of a plane flying very high. Through the trees he saw where the gray horse had stopped and was standing, his rider still hanging face down from the stirrup.

"Go catch that horse," he called to Primitivo who had started over toward him. Then, "Who was on guard at the top?"

"Rafael," Pilar said from the cave. She stood there, her hair still down her back in two braids.

"There's cavalry out," Robert Jordan said. "Get your damned gun up there."

He heard Pilar call, "Agustín," into the cave. Then she went into the cave and then two men came running out, one with the automatic rifle with its tripod swung on his shoulder; the other with a sackful of the pans.

"Get up there with them," Robert Jordan said to Anselmo. "You lie beside the gun and hold the legs still," he said.

The three of them went up the trail through the woods at a run.

The sun had not yet come up over the tops of the mountains and Robert Jordan stood straight buttoning his trousers and tightening his belt, the big pistol hanging from the lanyard on his wrist. He put

the pistol in its holster on his belt and slipped the knot down on the lanyard and passed the loop over his head.

Somebody will choke you with that sometime, he thought. Well, this has done it. He took the pistol out of the holster, removed the clip, inserted one of the cartridges from the row alongside of the holster and shoved the clip back into the butt of the pistol.

He looked through the trees to where Primitivo, holding the reins of the horse, was twisting the rider's foot out of the stirrup. The body lay face down in the snow and as he watched Primitivo was going through the pockets.

"Come on," he called. "Bring the horse."

As he knelt to put on his rope-soled shoes, Robert Jordan could feel Maria against his knees, dressing herself under the robe. She had no place in his life now.

That cavalryman did not expect anything, he was thinking. He was not following horse tracks and he was not even properly alert, let alone alarmed. He was not even following the tracks up to the post. He must have been one of a patrol scattered out in these hills. But when the patrol misses him they will follow his tracks here. Unless the snow melts first, he thought. Unless something happens to the patrol.

"You better get down below," he said to Pablo.

They were all out of the cave now, standing there with the carbines and with grenades on their belts. Pilar held a leather bag of grenades toward Robert Jordan and he took three and put them in his pocket. He ducked into the cave, found his two packs, opened the one with the submachine gun in it and took out the barrel and stock, slipped the stock onto the forward assembly and put one clip into the gun and three in his pockets. He locked the pack and started for the door. I've got two pockets full of hardware, he thought. I hope the seams hold. He came out of the cave and said to Pablo, "I'm going up above. Can Agustín shoot that gun?"

"Yes," Pablo said. He was watching Primitivo leading up the

horse.

"Mira Qué caballo," he said. "Look, what a horse."

The big gray was sweating and shivering a little and Robert Jordan patted him on the withers.

"I will put him with the others," Pablo said.

"No," Robert Jordan said. "He has made tracks into here. He must make them out."

"True," agreed Pablo. "I will ride him out and will hide him and bring him in when the snow is melted. Thou hast much head today, *Inglés."*

"Send some one below," Robert Jordan said. "We've got to get up there."

"It is not necessary," Pablo said. "Horsemen cannot come that way. But we can get out, by there and by two other places. It is better not to make tracks if there are planes coming. Give me the *bota* with wine, Pilar."

"To go off and get drunk," Pilar said. "Here, take these instead." He reached over and put two of the grenades in his pockets.

"Qué va, to get drunk," Pablo said. "There is gravity in the situation. But give me the *bota.* I do not like to do all this on water."

He reached his arms up, took the reins and swung up into the saddle. He grinned and patted the nervous horse. Robert Jordan saw him rub his leg along the horse's flank affectionately.

"Qué caballo más bonito," he said and patted the big gray again. *"Qué caballo más hermoso.* Come on. The faster this gets out of here the better."

He reached down and pulled the light automatic rifle with its ventilated barrel, really a submachine gun built to take the 9 mm. pistol cartridge, from the scabbard, and looked at it. "Look how they are armed," he said. "Look at modern cavalry."

"There's modern cavalry over there on his face," Robert Jordan said. *"Vámonos."*

"Do you, Andrés, saddle and hold the horses in readiness. If you

hear firing bring them up to the woods behind the gap. Come with thy arms and leave the women to hold the horses. Fernando, see that my sacks are brought also. Above all, that my sacks are brought carefully. Thou to look after my sacks, too," he said to Pilar. "Thou to verify that they come with the horses. *Vámonos,"* he said. "Let us go."

"The Maria and I will prepare all for leaving," Pilar said. Then to Robert Jordan, "Look at him," nodding at Pablo on the gray horse, sitting him in the heavy-thighed herdsman manner, the horse's nostrils widening as Pablo replaced the clip in the automatic rifle. "See what a horse has done for him."

"That I should have two horses," Robert Jordan said fervently.

"Danger is thy horse."

"Then give me a mule," Robert Jordan grinned.

"Strip me that," he said to Pilar and jerked his head toward where the man lay face down in the snow. "And bring everything, all the letters and papers, and put them in the outside pocket of my sack. Everything, understand?"

"Yes."

"Vámonos," he said.

Pablo rode ahead and the two men followed in a single file in or- der not to track up the snow. Robert Jordan carried the submachine gun muzzle down, carrying it by its forward hand grip. I wish it took the same ammunition that saddle gun takes, he thought. But it doesn't. This is a German gun. This was old Kashkin's gun.

The sun was coming over the mountains now. A warm wind was blowing and the snow was melting. It was a lovely late spring morntng.

Robert Jordan looked back and saw Maria now standing with Pilar. Then she came running up the trail. He dropped behind Primitivo to speak to her.

"Thou," she said. "Can I go with thee?"

“No. Help Pilar.”

She was walking behind him and put her hand on his arm.

“I’m coming.”

“Nay.”

She kept on walking close behind him.

“I could hold the legs of the gun in the way thou told Anselmo.”

“Thou wilt hold no legs. Neither of guns nor of nothing.”

Walking beside him she reached forward and put her hand in his pocket.

“No,” he said. “But take good care of thy wedding shirt.”

“Kiss me,” she said, “if thou goest.”

“Thou art shameless,” he said.

“Yes,” she said. “Totally.”

“Get thee back now. There is much work to do. We may fight here if they follow these horse tracks.”

“Thou,” she said. “Didst thee see what he wore on his chest?”

“Yes. Why not?”

“It was the Sacred Heart.”

“Yes. All the people of Navarre wear it.”

“And thou shot for that?”

“No. Below it. Get thee back now.”

“Thou,” she said. “I sawall.”

“Thou saw nothing. One man. One man from a horse. *Vete.* Get thee back.”

“Say that you love me.”

“No. Not now.”

“Not love me now?”

“Déjamos. Get thee back. One does not do that and love all at the same moment.”

“I want to go to hold the legs of the gun and while it speaks love thee all in the same moment.”

“Thou art crazy. Get thee back now.”

“I am crazy,” she said. “I love thee.”

"Then get thee back."

"Good. I go. And if thou dost not love me, I love thee enough for both."

He looked at her and smiled through his thinking.

"When you hear firing," he said, "come with the horses. Aid the Pilar with my sacks. It is possible there will be nothing. I hope so."

"I go," she said. "Look what a horse Pablo rides."

The big gray was moving ahead up the trail.

"Yes. But go."

"I go."

Her fist, clenched tight in his pocket, beat hard against his thigh. He looked at her and saw there were tears in her eyes. She pulled her fist out of his pocket and put both arms tight around his neck and kissed him.

"I go," she said. *"Me voy.* I go."

He looked back and saw her standing there, the first morning sunlight on her brown face and the cropped, tawny, burned-gold hair. She lifted her fist at him and turned and walked back down the trail, her head down.

Primitivo turned around and looked after her.

"If she did not have her hair cut so short she would be a pretty girl," he said.

"Yes," Robert Jordan said. He was thinking of something else.

"How is she in the bed?" Primitivo asked.

"What?"

"In the bed."

"Watch thy mouth."

"One should not be offended when—"

"Leave it," Robert Jordan said. He was looking at the position.

Chapter Twenty-Two

“Cut me pine branches,” Robert Jordan said to Primitivo, “and bring them quickly.”

“I do not like the gun there,” he said to Agustín.

“Why?”

“Place it over there,” Robert Jordan pointed, “and later I will tell thee.”

“Here, thus. Let me help thee. Here,” he said, then squatted down.

He looked out across the narrow oblong, noting the height of the rocks on either side.

“It must be farther,” he said, “farther out. Good. Here. That will do until it can be done properly. There. Put the stones there. Here is one. Put another there at the side. Leave room for the muzzle to swing. The stone must be farther to this side. Anselmo. Get thee down to the cave and bring me an ax. Quickly.”

“Have you never had a proper emplacement for the gun?” he said to Agustín.

“We always placed it here.”

“Kashkin never said to put it there?”

“No. The gun was brought after he left.”

“Did no one bring it who knew how to use it?”

“No. It was brought by porters.”

“What a way to do things,” Robert Jordan said. “It was just given to you without instruction?”

“Yes, as a gift might be given. One for us and one for El Sordo. Four men brought them. Anselmo guided them.”

“It was a wonder they did not lose them with four men to cross the lines.”

“I thought so, too,” Agustín said. “I thought those who sent them meant for them to be lost. But Anselmo brought them well.”

“You know how to handle it?”

“Yes. I have experimented. I know. Pablo knows. Primitivo knows. So does Fernando. We have made a study of taking it apart and putting it together on the table in the cave. Once we had it apart and could not get it together for two days. Since then we have not had it apart.”

“Does it shoot now?”

“Yes. But we do not let the gypsy nor others frig with it.”

“You see? From there it was useless,” he said. “Look. Those rocks which should protect your Ranks give cover to those who will attack you. With such a gun you must seek a flatness over which to fire. Also you must take them sideways. See? Look now. All that is dominated.”

“I see,” said Agustín. “But we have never fought in defense except when our town was taken. At the train there were soldiers with the *máquina* .”

“Then we will all learn together,” Robert Jordan said. “There are a few things to observe. Where is the gypsy who should be here?”

“I do not know.”

“Where is it possible for him to be?”

“I do not know.”

Pablo had ridden out through the pass and turned once and ridden in a circle across the level space at the top that was the field of fire for the automatic rifle. Now Robert Jordan watched him riding down the slope alongside the tracks the horse had left when he was ridden in. Hedisappeared in the trees turning to the left.

“I hope he doesn’t run right into cavalry,” Robert Jordan thought. “I’m afraid we’d have him right here in our laps.”

Primitivo brought the pine branches and Robert Jordan stuck

them through the snow into the unfrozen earth, arching them over the gun from either side.

"Bring more," he said. "There must be cover for the two men who serve it. This is not good but it will serve until the ax comes, Listen," he said, "if you hear a plane lie Rat wherever thou art in the shadows of the rocks. I am here with the gun."

Now with the sun up and the warm wind blowing it was pleasant on the side of the rocks where the sun shone. Four horses, Robert Jordan thought. The two women and me, Anselmo, Primitivo, Fernando, Agustín, what the hell is the name of the other brother? That's eight, Not counting the gypsy. Makes nine. Plus Pablo gone with one horse makes ten. Andrés is his name. The other brother. Plus the other, Eladio. Makes ten. That's not one-half a horse apiece. Three men can hold this and four can get away. Five with Pablo. That's two left over. Three with Eladio. Where the hell is he?

God knows what will happen to Sordo today if they picked up the trail of those horses in the snow. That was tough; the snow stopping that way. But it melting today will even things up. But not for Sordo. I'm afraid it's too late to even it up for Sordo.

If we can last through today and not have to fight we can swing the whole show tomorrow with what we have. I know we can. Not well, maybe. Not as it should be, to be foolproof, not as we would have done; but using everybody we can swing it. *If we don't have to fight today.* God help us if we have to fight today.

I don't know any place better to lay up in the meantime than this. If we move now we only leave tracks. This is as good a place as any and if the worst gets to be the worst there are three ways out of this place. There is the dark then to come and from wherever we are in these hills, I can reach and do the bridge at daylight. I don't know why I worried about it before. It seems easy enough now. 1 hope they get the planes up on time for once. I certainly hope that. Tomorrow is going to be a day with dust on the road.

Well, today will be very interesting or very dull. Thank God we've got that cavalry mount out and away from here. I don't think even if they ride right up here they will go in the way those tracks are now. They'll think he stopped and circled and they'll pick up Pablo's tracks. I wonder where the old swine will go. He'll probably leave tracks like an old bull elk spooking out of the country and work way up and then when the snow melts circle back below. That horse certainly did things for him. Of course he may have just mucked off with him too. Well, he should be able to take care of himself. He's been doing this a long time. I wouldn't trust him farther than you can throw Mount Everest, though.

I suppose it's smarter to use these rocks and build a good blind for this gun than to make a proper emplacement for it. You'd be digging and get caught with your pants down if they come or if the planes come. She will hold this, the way she is, as long as it is any use to hold it, and anyway I can't stay to fight. I have to get out of here with that stuff and I'm going to take Anselmo with me. Who would stay to cover us while we got away if we have to fight here?

Just then, while he was watching all of the country that was visible, he saw the gypsy coming through the rocks to the left. He was walking with a loose, high-hipped, sloppy swing, his carbine was slung on his back, his brown face was grinning and he carried two big hares, one in each hand. He carried them by the legs, heads swinging.

"Hola, Roberto," he called cheerfully.

Robert Jordan put his hand to his mouth, and the gypsy looked startled. He slid over behind the rocks to where Robert Jordan was crouched beside the brush-shielded automatic rifle. He crouched down and laid the hares in the snow. Robert Jordan looked up at him.

"You *hijo de la gran puta!"* he said softly. "Where the obscenity have you been?"

"I tracked them," the gypsy said. "I got them both. They had

made love in the snow."

"And thy post?"

"It was not for long," the gypsy whispered. "What passes? Is there an alarm?"

"There is cavalry out."

"Rediósl" the gypsy said. "Hast thou seen them?"

"There is one at the camp now," Robert Jordan said. "He came for breakfast."

"I thought I heard a shot or something like one," the gypsy said.

"I obscenity in the milk! Did he come through here?"

"Here. *Thy* post."

"Ay, mi madre!" the gypsy said. "I am a poor, unlucky man."

"If thou wert not a gypsy, I would shoot thee."

"No, Roberto. Don't say that. I am sorry. It was the hares. Before daylight I heard the male thumping in the snow. You cannot imagine what a debauch they were engaged in. r went toward the noise but they were gone. I followed the tracks in the snow and high up r found them together and slew them both. Feel the fatness of the two for this time of year. Think what the Pilar will do with those two. I am sorry, Roberto, as sorry as thee. Was the cavalryman killed?"

"Yes."

"By thee?"

"Yes."

"Qué tio!" the gypsy said in open flattery. "Thou art a veritable phenomenon."

"Thy mother!" Robert Jordan said. He could not help grinning at the gypsy. "Take thy hares to camp and bring us up some breakfast."

He put a hand out and felt of the hares that lay limp, long, heavy, thick-furred, big-footed and long-eared in the snow, their round dark eyes open.

"They *are* fat," he said.

“Fat!” the gypsy said. “There’s a tub of lard on the ribs of each one. In my life have I never dreamed of such hares.”

“Go then,” Robert Jordan said, “and come quickly with the breakfast and bring to me the documentation of that *requcte.* Ask Pilar for it.”

“You are not angry with me, Roberto?”

“Not angry. Disgusted that you should leave your post. Suppose it had been a troop of cavalry?”

“Rediós,” the gypsy said. “How reasonable you are.”

“Listen to me. You cannot leave a post again like that. Never. I do not speak of shooting lightly.”

“Of course not. And another thing. Never would such an opportunity as the two hares present itself again. Not in the life of one man.”

“Anda!” Robert Jordan said. “And hurry back.”

The gypsy picked up the two hares and slipped back through the rocks and Robert Jordan looked out across the flat opening and the slopes of the hill below. Two crows circled overhead and then lit in a pine tree below. Another crow joined them and Robert Jordan, watching them, thought: those are my sentinels. As long as those are quiet there is no one coming through the trees.

The gypsy, he thought. He is truly worthless. He has no political development, nor any discipline, and you could not rely on him for anything. But I need him for tomorrow. I have a use for him tomorrow. It’s odd to see a gypsy in a war. They should be exempted like conscientious objectors. Or as the physically and mentally unfit. They are worthless. But conscientious objectors weren’t exempted in this war. No one was exempted. It came to one and all alike. Well, it had come here now to this lazy outfit. They had it now.

Agustín and Primitivo came up with the brush and Robert Jordan built a good blind for the automatic rifle, a blind that would conceal the gun from the air and that would look natural from the

forest. He showed them where to place a man high in the rocks to the right where he could see all the country below and to the right, and another where he could command the only stretch where the left wall might be climbed.

"Do not fire if you see anyone from there," Robert Jordan said. "Roll a rock down as a warning, a small rock, and signal to us with thy rifle, thus," he lifted the rifle and held it over his head as though guarding it. "Thus for numbers," he lifted the rifle up and down. "If they are dismounted point thy rifle muzzle at the ground. Thus. Do not fire from there until thou hearest the *máquina* fire. Shoot at a man's knees when you shoot from that height. If you hear me whistle twice on this whistle get down, keeping behind cover, and come to these rocks where the *máquina* is."

Primitivo raised the rifle.

"I understand," he said. "It is very simple."

"Send first the small rock as a warning and indicate the direction and the number. See that you are not seen."

"Yes," Primitivo said. "If I can throw a grenade?"

"Not until the *máquina* has spoken. It may be that cavalry will come searching for their comrade and still not try to enter. They may follow the tracks of Pablo. We do not want combat if it can be avoided. Above all that we should avoid it. Now get up there."

"Me uoy," Prirnitivo said, and climbed up into the high rocks with his carbine.

"Thou, Agustín," Robert Jordan said. "What do you know of the gun?"

Agustín squatted there, tall, black, stubbly-jeweled, with his sunken eyes and thin mouth and his big work-worn hands.

"Pues, to load it. To aim it. To shoot it. Nothing more."

"You must not fire until they are within fifty meters and only when you are sure they will be coming into the pass which leads to the cave," Robert Jordan said.

"Yes. How far is that?"

"That rock."

"If there is an officer shoot him first. Then move the gun onto the others. Move very slowly. It takes little movement. I will teach Fernando to tap it. Hold it tight so that it does not jump and sight carefully and do not fire more than six shots at a time if you can help it. For the fire of the gun jumps upward. But each time fire at one man and then move from him to another. At a man on a horse, shoot at his belly."

"Yes."

"One man should hold the tripod still so that the gun does not jump. Thus. He will load the gun for thee."

"And where will you be?"

"I will be here on the left. Above, where I can see all and I will cover thy left with this small *máquina.* Here. If they should come it would be possible to make a massacre. But you must not fire until they are that close."

"I believe that we could make a massacre. *Menuda matanzal"*

"But I hope they do not come."

"If it were not for thy bridge we could make a massacre here and get out."

"It would avail nothing. That would serve no purpose. The bridge is a part of a plan to win the war. This would be nothing. This would be an incident. A nothing."

"Qué va, nothing. Every fascist dead is a fascist less."

"Yes. But with this of the bridge we can take Segovia. The Capital of a Province. Think of that. It will be the first one we will take."

"Thou believest in this seriously? That we can take Segovia?"

"Yes. It is possible with the bridge blown correctly."

"I would like to have the massacre here and the bridge, too."

"Thou hast much appetite," Robert Jordan told him.

All this time he had been watching the crows. Now he saw one was watching something. The bird cawed and flew up. But the other

crow still stayed in the tree. Robert Jordan looked up toward Primitivo's place high in the rocks. He saw him watching out over the country below but he made no signa!. Robert Jordan leaned forward and worked the lock on the automatic rifle, saw the round in the chamber and let the lock down. The crow was still there in the tree. The other circled wide over the snow and then settled again. In the sun and the warm wind the snow was falling from the laden branches of the pines.

"I have a massacre for thee for tomorrow morning," Robert Jordan said. "It is necessary to exterminate the post at the sawmil!."

"I am ready," Agustín said, *"Estoy listo."*

"Also the post at the road mender's hut below the bridge."

"For the one or for the other," Agustín said. "Or for both."

"Not for both. They will be done at the same time," Robert Jordan said.

"Then for either one," Agustín said. "Now for a long time have I wished for action in this war. Pablo has rotted us here with inaction." Anselmo came up with the ax.

"Do you wish more branches?" he asked. "To me it seems well hidden."

"Not branches," Robert Jordan said. "Two small trees that we can plant here and there to make it look more natura!' There are not enough trees here for it to be truly natura!'"'

"I will bring them."

"Cut them well back, so the stumps cannot be seen."

Robert Jordan heard the ax sounding in the woods behind him. He looked up at Primitivo above in the rocks and he looked down at the pines across the clearing. The one crow was still there. Then he heard the first high, throbbing mur~ur of a plane coming. He looked up and saw it high and tiny and silver in the sun, seeming hardly to move in the high sky.

"They cannot see us," he said to Agustfn. "But it is well to keep down. That is the second observation plane today."

“And those of yesterday?” Agustín asked.

“They are like a bad dream now,” Robert Jordan said.

“They must be at Segovia. The bad dream waits there to become a reality.”

The plane was out of sight now over the mountains but the sound of its motors still persisted.

As Robert Jordan looked, he saw the crow fly up. He flew straight away through the trees without cawing.

Chapter Twenty-Three

"Get thee down," Robert Jordan whispered to Agustín, and he turned his head and flicked his hand *Down, Down,* to Anselmo who was coming through the gap with a pine tree, carrying it over his shoulder like a Christmas tree. He saw the old man drop his pine tree behind a rock and then he was out of sight in the rocks and Robert Jordan was looking ahead across the open space toward the timber. He saw nothing and heard nothing but he could feel his heart pounding and then he heard the clack of stone on stone and the leaping, dropping clicks of a small rock falling. He turned his head to the right and looking up saw Primitive's rifle raised and lowered four times horizontally. Then there was nothing more to see but the white stretch in front of him with the circle of horse tracks and the timber beyond.

"Cavalry," he said softly to Agustín.

Agustín looked at him and his dark, sunken cheeks widened at their base as he grinned. Robert Jordan noticed he was sweating. He reached over and put his hand on his shoulder. His hand was still there as they saw the four horsemen ride out of the timber and he felt the muscles in Agustín's back twitch under his hand.

One horseman was ahead and three rode behind. The one ahead was following the horse tracks. He looked down as he rode. The other three came behind him, fanned out through the timber. They were all watching carefully. Robert Jordan felt his heart beating against the snowy ground as he lay, his elbows spread wide and watched them over the sights of the automatic rifle.

The man who was leading rode along the trail to where Pablo

had circled and stopped. The others rode up to him and they all stopped.

Robert Jordan saw them clearly over the blued steel barrel of the automatic rifle. He saw the faces of the men, the sabers hanging, the sweat-darkened Ranks of the horses, and the cone-like slope of the khaki capes, and the Navarrese slant of the khaki berets. The leader turned his horse directly toward the opening in the rocks where the gun was placed and Robert Jordan saw his young, sun- and wind-darkened face, his close-set eyes, hawk nose and the over-long wedge-shaped chin.

Sitting his horse there, the horse's chest toward Robert Jordan, the horse's head high, the butt of the light automatic rifle projecting forward from the scabbard at the right of the saddle, the leader pointed toward the opening where the gun was.

Robert Jordan sunk his elbows into the ground and looked along the barrel at the four riders stopped there in the snow. Three of them had their automatic rifles out. Two carried them across the pommels of their saddles. The other sat his' horse with the rifle swung out to the right, the butt resting against his hip.

You hardly ever see them at such range, he thought. Not along the barrel of one of these do you see them like this. Usually the rear sight is raised and they seem miniatures of men and you have hell to make it carry up there; or they come running, flopping, running, and you beat a slope with fire or bar a certain street, or keep it on the windows; or far away you see them marching on a road. Only at the trains do you see them like this. Only then are they like now, and with four of these you can make them scatter. Over the gun sights, at this range, it makes them twice the size of men.

Thou, he thought, looking at the wedge of the front sight placed now firm in the slot of the rear sight, the top of the wedge against the center of the leader's chest, a little to the right of the scarlet device that showed bright in the morning sun against the khaki cape. Though, he thought, thinking in Spanish now and pressing his

fingers forward against the trigger guard to keep it away from where it would bring the quick, shocking, hurtling rush from the automatic rifle. Thou, he thought again, thou art dead now in thy youth. And thou, he thought, and thou, and thou. But let it not happen. Do not let it happen.

He felt Agustín beside him start to cough, felt him hold it, choke and swallow. Then as he looked along the oiled blue of the barrel out through the opening between the branches, his finger still pressed forward against the trigger guard, he saw the leader turn his horse and point into the timber where Pablo's trail led. The four of them trotted into the timber and Agustín said softly, *"Cabronesl"*

Robert Jordan looked behind him at the rocks where Anselmo had dropped the tree.

The gypsy, Rafael, was coming toward them through the rocks, carrying a pair of cloth saddlebags, his rifle slung on his back. Robert Jordan waved him down and the gypsy ducked out of sight.

"We could have killed all four," Agustín said quietly. He was still wet with sweat.

"Yes," Robert Jordan whispered. "But with the firing who knows what might have come?"

Just then he heard the noise of another rock falling and he looked around quickly. But both the gypsy and Anselmo were out of sight. He looked at his wrist watch and then up to where Primitivo was raising and lowering his rifle in what seemed an infinity of short jerks. Pablo has forty-five minutes' start, Robert Jordan thought, and then he heard the noise of a body of cavalry coming.

"No te apures," he whispered to Agustín. "Do not worry. They will pass as the others."

They came into sight trotting along the edge of the timber in column of twos, twenty mounted men, armed and uniformed as the others had been, their sabers swinging, their carbines in their holsters; and then they went down into the timber as the others had.

"Tu ves?" Robert Jordan said to Agustín. "Thou seest?"

"There were many," Agustín said.

"These would we have had to deal with if we had destroyed the others," Robert Jordan said very softly. His heart had quieted now and his shirt felt wet on his chest from the melting snow, There was a hollow feeling in his chest.

The sun was bright on the snow and it was melting fast. He could see it hollowing away from the tree trunks and just ahead of the gun, before his eyes, the snow surface was damp and lacily fragile as the heat of the sun melted the top and the warmth of the earth breathed warmly up at the snow that lay upon it. Robert Jordan looked up at Primitivo's post and saw him signal, "Nothing," crossing his two hands, palms down.

Anselmo's head showed above a rock and Robert Jordan motioned him up. The old man slipped from rock to rock until he crept up and lay down flat beside the gun.

"Many," he said. "Many!"

"I do not need the trees," Robert Jordan said to him. "There is no need for further forestal improvement."

Both Anselmo and Agustín grinned.

"This has stood scrutiny well and it would be dangerous to plant trees now because those people will return and perhaps they are not stupid."

He felt the need to talk that, with him, was the sign that there had just been much danger. He could always tell how bad it had been by the strength of the desire to talk that came after.

"It was a good blind, eh?" he said.

"Good," said Agustín. "To obscenity with all fascism good. We could have killed the four of them. Didst thou see?" he said to Anselmo.

"I saw."

"Thou," Robert Jordan said to Anselmo. "Thou must go to the post of yesterday or another good post of thy selection to watch the

road and report on all movement as of yesterday. Already we are late in that. Stay until dark. Then come in and we will send another."

"But the tracks that I will make?"

"Go from below as soon as the snow is gone. The road will be muddied by the snow. Note if there has been much traffic of trucks or if there are tank tracks in the softness on the road. That is all we can tell until you are there to observe."

"With your permission?" the old man asked.

"Surely."

"With your permission, would it not be better for me to go into La Granja and inquire there what passed last night and arrange for one to observe today thus in the manner you have taught me? Such a one could report tonight or, better, I could go again to La Granja for the report."

"Have you no fear of encountering cavalry?"

"Not when the snow is gone."

"Is there some one in La Granja capable of this?"

"Yes. Of this, yes. It would be a woman. There are various women of trust in La Granja."

"I believe it," Agustín said. "More, I know it, and several who serve for other purposes. You do not wish me to go?"

"Let the old man go. You understand this gun and the day is not over."

"I will go when the snow melts," Anselmo said. "And the snow is melting fast."

"What think you of their chance of catching Pablo?" Robert Jordan asked Agustín.

"Pablo is smart," Agustín said. "Do men catch a wise stag without hounds?"

"Sometimes," Robert Jordan said.

"Not Pablo," Agustín said. "Clearly, he is only a garbage of what he once was. But it is not for nothing that he is alive and

comfortable in these hills and able to drink himself to death while there are so many others that have died against a wall."

"Is he as smart as they say?"

"He is much smarter."

"He has not seemed of great ability here."

"Cómo Qué no? If he were not of great ability he would have died last night. It seems to me you do not understand politics, *Inglés,* nor guerilla warfare. In politics and this other the first thing is to continue to exist. Look how he continued to exist last night. And the quantity of dung he ate both from me and from thee."

Now that Pablo was back in the movements of the unit, Robert Jordan did not wish to talk against him and as soon as he had uttered it he regretted saying the thing about his ability. He knew himself how smart Pablo was. It was Pablo who had seen instantly all that was wrong with the orders for the destruction of the bridge. He had made the remark only from dislike and he knew as he made it that it was wrong. It was part of the talking too much after a strain. So now he dropped the matter and said to Anselmo, "And to go into La Granja in daylight?"

"It is not bad," the old man said. "I will not go with a military band."

"Nor with a bell around his neck," Agustín said. "Nor carrying a banner."

"How will you go?"

"Above and down through the forest."

"But if they pick you up."

"I have papers."

"So have we all but thou must eat the wrong ones quickly."

Anselmo shook his head and tapped the breast pocket of his smock.

"How many times have I contemplated that," he said. "And never did I like to swallow paper."

"I have thought we should carry a little mustard on them all,"

Robert Jordan said. “In my left breast pocket I carry our papers. In my right the fascist papers. Thus one does not make a mistake in an emergency.”

It must have been bad enough when the leader of the first patrol of cavalry had pointed toward the entry because they were all talking very much. Too much, Robert Jordan thought.

“But look, Roberto,” Agustín said. “They say the government moves further to the right each day. That in the Republic they no longer say Comrade but Senor and Senora. Canst shift thy pockets?”

“When it moves far enough to the right I will carry them in my hip pocket,” Robert Jordan said, “and sew it in the center.”

“That they should stay in thy shirt,” Agustín said. “Are we to win this war and lose the revolution?”

“Nay,” Robert Jordan said. “But if we do not win this war there will be no revolution nor any Republic nor any thou nor any me nor anything but the most grand *carajo.”*

“So say I,” Anselmo said. “That we should win the war.”

“And afterwards shoot the anarchists and the Communists and all this *canalla* except the good Republicans,” Agustín said.

“That we should win this war and shoot nobody,” Anselmo said. “That we should govern justly and that all should participate in the benefits according as they have striven for them. And that those who have fought against us should be educated to see their error.”

“We will have to shoot many,” Agustín said. “Many, many, many.”

He thumped his closed right fist against the palm of his left hand.

“That we should shoot none. Not even the leaders. That they should be reformed by work.”

“I know the work I’d put them at,” Agustín said, and he picked up some snow and put it in his mouth.

“What, bad one?” Robert Jordan asked.

“Two trades of the utmost brilliance.”

"They are?"

Agustín put some more snow in his mouth and looked across the clearing where the cavalry had ridden. Then he spat the melted snow out. *"Vaya.* What a breakfast," he said. "Where is the filthy gypsy?"

"What trades?" Robert Jordan asked him. "Speak, bad mouth."

"Jumping from planes without parachutes," Agustín said, and his eyes shone. "That for those that we care for. And being nailed to the tops of fence posts to be pushed over back wards for the others."

"That way of speaking is ignoble," Anselmo said. "Thus we will never have a Republic."

"I would like to swim ten leagues in a strong soup made from the *cojones* of all of them," Agustín said. "And when I saw those four there and thought that we might kill them I was like a mare in the corral waiting for the stallion."

"You know why we did not kill them, though?" Robert Jordan said quietly.

"Yes," Agustín said. "Yes. But the necessity was on me as it is on a mare in heat. You cannot know what it is if you have not felt it."

"You sweated enough," Robert Jordan said. "I thought it was fear."

"Fear, yes," Agustín said. "Fear and the other. And .in this life there is no stronger thing than the other."

Yes, Robert Jordan thought. We do it coldly but they do not, nor ever have. It is their extra sacrament. Their old one that they had before the new religion came from the far end of the Mediterranean, the one they have never abandoned but only suppressed and hidden to bring it out again in wars and inquisitions. They are the people of the Auto de Fe; the act of faith. Killing is something one must do, but ours are different from theirs. And you, he thought, you have never been corrupted by it? You never had it in the Sierra? Nor at Usera? Nor through all the time in

Estremadura? Nor at any time? *Qué va,* he told himself. At every train.

Stop making dubious literature about the Berbers and the old Iberians and admit that you have liked to kill as all who are soldiers by choice have enjoyed it at some time whether they lie about it or not. Anselmo does not like to because he is a hunter, not a soldier. Don't idealize him, either. Hunters kill animals and soldiers kill men. Don't lie to yourself, he thought. Nor make up literature about it. You have been tainted with it for a long time now. And do not think against Anselmo either. He is a Christian. Something very rare in Catholic countries.

But with Agustín I had thought it was fear, he thought. That natural fear before action. So it was the other, too. Of course, he may be bragging now. There was plenty of fear. I felt the fear under my hand. Well, it was time to stop talking.

"See if the gypsy brought food," he said to Anselmo. "Do not let him come up. He is a fool. Bring it yourself. And however much he brought, send back for more. I am hungry."

Chapter Twenty-Four

Now the morning was late May, the sky was high and clear and the wind blew warm on Robert Jordan's shoulders. The snow was going fast and they were eating breakfast. There were two big sandwiches of meat and the goaty cheese apiece, and Robert Jordan had cut thick slices of onion with his clasp knife and put them on each side of the meat and cheese between the chunks of bread.

"You will have a breath that will carry through the forest to the fascists," Agustín said, his own mouth full.

"Give me the wineskin and I will rinse the mouth," Robert Jordan said, his mouth full of meat, cheese, onion and chewed bread.

He had never been hungrier and he filled his mouth with wine, faintly tarry-tasting from the leather bag, and swallowed. Then he took another big mouthful of wine, lifting the bag up to let the jet of wine spurt into the back of his mouth, the wineskin touching the needles of the blind of pine branches that covered the automatic rifle as he lifted his hand, his head leaning against the pine branches as he bent it back to let the wine run down.

"Dost thou want this other sandwich?" Agustín asked him, handing it toward him across the gun.

"No. Thank you. Eat it."

"I cannot. I am not accustomed to eat in the morning."

"You do not want it, truly?"

"Nay. Take it."

Robert Jordan took it and laid it on his lap while he got the onion out of his side jacket pocket where the grenades were and

opened his knife to slice it. He cut off a thin sliver of the surface that had dirtied in his pocket, then cut a thick slice. An outer segment fell and he picked it up and bent the circle together and put it into the sandwich.

"Eatest thou always onions for breakfast?" Agustín asked.

"When there are any."

"Do all in thy country do this?"

"Nay," Robert Jordan said. "It is looked on badly there."

"I am glad," Agustín said. "I had always considered America a civilized country."

"What hast thou against the onion?"

"The odor. Nothing more. Otherwise it is like the rose." Robert Jordan grinned at him with his mouth full.

"Like the rose," he said. "Mighty like the rose. A rose is a rose is an onion."

"Thy onions are affecting thy brain," Agustín said. "Take care."

"An onion is an onion is an onion," Robert Jordan said cheerily and, he thought, a stone is a stein is a rock is a boulder is a pebble.

"Rinse thy mouth with wine," Agustín said. "Thou art very rare, *Inglés.* There is great difference between thee and the last dynamiter who worked with us."

"There is one great difference."

"Tell it to me."

"I am alive and he is dead," Robert Jordan said. Then: what's the matter with you? he thought. Is that the way to talk? Does food make you that slap happy? What are you, drunk on onions? Is that all it means to you, now? It never meant much, he told himself truly. You tried to make it mean something, but it never did. There is no need to lie in the time that is left.

"No," he said, seriously now. "That one was a man who had suffered greatly."

"And thou? Hast thou not suffered?"

"No," said Robert Jordan. "I am of those who suffer little."

“Me also,” Agustín told him. “There are those who suffer and those who do not. I suffer very little.”

“Less bad,” Robert Jordan tipped up the wineskin again. “And with this, less.”

“I suffer for others.”

“As all good men should.”

“But for myself very little.”

“Hast thou a wife?”

“No.”

“Me neither.”

“But now you have the Maria.”

“Yes.”

“There is a rare thing,” Agustín said. “Since she came to us at the train the Pilar has kept her away from all as fiercely as though she were in a convent of Carmelites. You cannot imagine with what fierceness she guarded her. You come, and she gives her to thee as a present. How does that seem to thee?”

“It was not thus.”

“How was it, then?”

“She has put her in my care.”

“And thy care is to *joder* with her all night?”

“With luck.”

“What a manner to care for one.”

“You do not understand that one can take good care of one thus?”

“Yes, but such care could have been furnished by anyone of us.”

“Let us not talk of it any more,” Robert Jordan said. “I care for her seriously.”

“Seriously? “

“As there can be nothing more serious in this world.”

“And afterwards? After this of the bridge?”

“She goes with me.”

“Then,” Agustín said. “That no one speaks of it further and that

the two of you go with all luck." He lifted the leather wine bag and took a long pull, then handed it to Robert Jordan.

"One thing more, *Inglés,"* he said.

"Of course."

"I have cared much for her, too."

Robert Jordan put his hand on his shoulder.

"Much," Agustín said. "Much. More than one is able to imagine. "

"I can imagine."

"She has made an impression on me that does not dissipate."

"I can imagine."

"Look. I say this to thee in all seriousness."

"Say it."

"I have never touched her nor had anything to do with her but I care for her greatly. *Inglés,* do not treat her lightly. Because she sleeps with thee she is no whore."

"I will care for her."

"I believe thee. But more. You do not understand how such a girl would be if there had been no revolution. You have much responsibility. This one, truly, has suffered much. She is not as we are."

"I will marry her."

"Nay. Not that. There is no need for that under the revolution. But—" he nodded his head—"it would be better."

"I will marry her," Robert Jordan said and could feel his throat swelling as he said it. "I care for her greatly."

"Later," Agustín said. "When it is convenient. The important thing is to have the intention."

"I have it."

"Listen," Agustín said. "I am speaking too much of a matter in which I have no right to intervene, but hast thou known many girls of this country?"

"A few."

"Whores?"

"Some who were not." "How many?"

"Several."

"And did you sleep with them?"

"No."

"You see?"

"Yes."

"What I mean is that this Maria does not do this lightly."

"Nor I."

"If I thought you did I would have shot you last night as you lay with her. For this we kill much here."

"Listen, old one," Robert Jordan said. "It is because of the lack of time that there has been informality. What we do not have is time. Tomorrow we must fight. To me that is nothing. But for the Maria and me it means that we must live all of our life in this time."

"And a day and a night is little time," Agustín said.

"Yes. But there has been yesterday and the night before and last night."

"Look," Agustín said. "If I can aid thee."

"No. We are all right."

"If I could do anything for thee or for the cropped head—"

"No."

"Truly, there is little one man can do for another."

"No. There is much."

"What?"

"No matter what passes today and tomorrow in respect to combat, give me thy confidence and obey even though the orders may appear wrong."

"You have my confidence. Since this of the cavalry and the sending away of the horse."

"That was nothing. You see that we are working for one thing. To win the war. Unless we win, all other things are futile. Tomorrow we have a thing of great importance. Of true importance.

Also we will have combat. In combat there must be discipline. For many things are not as they appear. Discipline must come from trust and confidence."

Agustín spat on the ground.

"The Maria and all such things are apart," he said. "That you and the Maria should make use of what time there is as two human beings. If I can aid thee I am at thy orders. But for the thing of tomorrow I will obey thee blindly. If it is necessary that one should die for the thing of tomorrow one goes gladly and with the heart light."

"Thus do I feel," Robert Jordan said. "But to hear it from thee brings pleasure."

"And more," Agustín said. "That one above," he pointed toward Pr irnitivo, "is a dependable value. The Pilar is much, much more than thou canst imagine. The old man Anselmo, also. Andrés also. Eladio also. Very quiet, but a dependable element. And Fernando. I do not know how thou hast appreciated him. It is true he is heavier than mercury. He is fuller of boredom than a steer drawing a cart on the highroad. But to fight and to do as he is told. *Es muy hombre!* Thou wilt see."

"We are lucky."

"No. We have two weak elements. The gypsy and Pablo. But the band of Sordo are as much better than we are as we are better than goat manure."

"All is well then."

"Yes," Agustín said. "But I wish it was for today."

"Me, too. To finish with it. But it is not."

"Do you think it will be bad?"

"It can be."

"But thou are very cheerful now, *Inglés."*

"Yes."

"Me also. In spite of this of the Maria and all."

"Do you know why?"

"No."

"Me neither. Perhaps it is the day. The day is good."

"Who knows? Perhaps it is that we will have action."

"I think it is that," Robert Jordan said. "But not today. Of all things; of all importance we must avoid it today."

As he spoke he heard something. It was a noise far off that came above the sound of the warm wind in the trees. He could not be sure and he held his mouth open and listened, glancing up at Primitive as he did so. He thought he heard it but then it was gone. The wind was blowing in the pines and now Robert Jordan strained all of himself to listen. Then he heard it faintly coming down the wind.

"It is nothing tragic with me," he heard Agustín say. "That I should never have the Maria is nothing. I will go with the whores as always."

"Shut up," he said, not listening, and lying beside him, his head having been turned away. Agustín looked over at him suddenly.

"Qué pasa?" he asked.

Robert Jordan put his hand over his own mouth and went on listening. There it came again. It came faint, muted, dry and far away. But there was no mistaking it now. It was the precise, crackling, curling roll of automatic rifle I fire. It sounded as though pack after pack of miniature firecrackers were going off at a distance that was almost out of hearing.

Robert Jordan looked up at Primitivo who had his head up now, his face looking toward them, his hand cupped to his ear. As he looked Primitivo pointed up the mountain toward the highest country.

"They are fighting at El Sordo's," Robert Jordan said.

"Then let us go to aid them," Agustín said. "Collect the people. *Vámonos."*

"No," Robert Jordan said. "We stay here."

Chapter Twenty-Five

Robert Jordan looked up at where Primitivo stood now in his lookout post, holding his rifle and pointing. He nodded his head but the man kept pointing, putting his hand to his ear and then pointing insistently and as though he could not possibly have been understood.

"Do you stay with this gun and unless it is sure, sure, sure that they are coming in do not fire. And then not until they reach that shrub," Robert Jordan pointed. "Do you understand?"

"Yes. But—"

"No but. I will explain to thee later. I go to Primitivo."

Anselmo was by him and he said to the old man:

"Viejo, stay there with Agustín with the gun." He spoke slowly and unhurriedly. "He must not fire unless cavalry is actually entering. If they merely present themselves he must let them alone as we did before. If he must fire, hold the legs of the tripod firm for him and hand him the pans when they are empty."

"Good," the old man said. "And La Granja?"

"Later."

Robert Jordan climbed up, over and around the gray boulders that were wet now under his hands as he pulled himself up. The sun was melting the snow on them fast. The tops of the boulders were drying and as he climbed he looked across the country and saw the pine woods and the long open glade and the dip of the country before the high mountains beyond. Then he stood beside Primitivo in a hollow behind two boulders and the short, brownfaced man said to him, "They are attacking Sordo. What is it that we do?"

“Nothing,” Robert Jordan said.

He heard the firing clearly here and as he looked across the country, he saw, far off, across the distant valley where the country rose steeply again, a troop of cavalry ride out of the timber and cross the snowy slope riding uphill in the direction of the firing. He saw the oblong double line of men and horses dark against the snow as theyforced at an angle up the hill. He watched the double line top the ridge and go into the farther timber.

“We have to aid them,” Primitivo said. His voice was dry and flat.

“It is impossible,” Robert Jordan told him. “I have expected this all morning.”

“How?”

“They went to steal horses last night. The snow stopped and they tracked them up there.”

“But we have to aid them,” Primitivo said. “We cannot leave them alone to this. Those are our comrades.” Robert Jordan put his hand on the other man’s shoulder.

“We can do nothing,” he said. “If we could I would do it.”

“There is a way to reach there from above. We can take that way with the horses and the two guns. This one below and thine. We can aid them thus.”

“Listen—” Robert Jordan said.

“That is what I listen to,” Prirnitivo said.

The firing was rolling in overlapping waves. Then they heard the noise of hand grenades heavy and sodden in the dry rolling of the automatic rifle fire.

“They are lost,” Robert Jordan said. “They were lost when the snow stopped. If we go there we are lost, too. It is impossible to divide what force we have.”

There was a gray stubble of beard stippled over Primitive’s jaws, his lip and his neck. The rest of his face was flat brown with a broken, flattened nose and deep-set gray eyes, and watching him

Robert Jordan saw the stubble twitching at the corners of his mouth and over the cord of his throat.

"Listen to it," he said. "It is a massacre."

"If they have surrounded the hollow it is that," Robert Jordan said. "Some may have gotten out."

"Coming on them now we could take them from behind," Primitivo said. "Let four of us go with the horses."

"And then what? What happens after you take them from behind?"

"We join with Sordo."

"To die there? Look at the sun. The day is long."

The sky was high and cloudless and the sun was hot on their backs. There were big bare patches now on the southern slope of the open glade below them and the snow was all dropped from the pine trees. The boulders below them that had been wet as the snow melted were steaming faintly now in the hot sun.

"You have to stand it," Robert Jordan said. *"Hay que aguantarse.* There are things like this in a war."

"But there is nothing we can do? Truly?" Primitivo looked at him and Robert Jordan knew he trusted him. "Thou couldst not send me and another with the small machine gun?"

"It would be useless," Robert Jordan said.

He thought he saw something that he was looking for but it was a hawk that slid down into the wind and then rose above the line of the farthest pine woods. "It would be useless if we all went," he said.

Just then the firing doubled in intensity and in it was the heavy bumping of the hand grenades.

"Oh, obscenity them," Primitivo said with an absolute devoutness of blasphemy, tears in his eyes and his cheeks twitching. "Oh, God and the Virgin, obscenity them in the milk of their filth."

"Calm thyself," Robert Jordan said. "You will be fighting them soon enough. Here comes the woman."

Pilar was climbing up to them, making heavy going of it in the boulders.

Primitivo kept saying. “Obscenity them. Oh, God and the Virgin, befoul them,” each time for firing rolled down the wind, and Robert Jordan climbed down to help Pilar up.

“Qué tal, woman,” he said, taking hold of both her wrists and hoisting as she climbed heavily over the last boulder.

“Thy binoculars,” she said and lifted their strap over her head.

“So it has come to Sordo?”

“Yes.”

“Pobre,” she said in commiseration. “Poor Sordo.”

She was breathing heavily from the climb and she took hold of Robert Jordan’s hand and gripped it tight in hers as she looked out over the country.

“How does the combat seem?”

“Bad. Very bad.”

“He’s *jodido?”*

“I believe so.”

“Pobre,” she said. “Doubtless because of the horses?”

“Probably.”

“Pobre,” Pilar said. Then, “Rafael recounted me all of an entire novel of dung about cavalry. What came?”

“A patrol and part of a squadron.”

“Up to what point?”

Robert Jordan pointed out where the patrol had stopped and showed her where the gun was hidden. From where they stood they could just see one of Agustín’s boots protruding from the rear of the blind.

“The gypsy said they rode to where the gun muzzle pressed against the chest of the horse of the leader,” Pilar said. “What a race! Thy glasses were in the cave.”

“Have you packed?”

“All that can be taken. Is there news of Pablo?”

"He was forty minutes ahead of the cavalry. They took his trail."

Pilar grinned at him. She still held his hand. Now she dropped it. "They'll never see him," she said. "Now for Sordo. Can we do anything?"

"Nothing."

"Pobre," she said. "I was fond of Sordo. Thou art sure, *sure* that he is*jodido?"*

"Yes. I have seen much cavalry."

"More than were here?"

"Another full troop on their way up there."

"Listen to it," Pilar said. *"Pobre, pobre Sordo. "*

They listened to the firing.

"Primitive wanted to go up there," Robert Jordan said.

"Art thou crazy?" Pilar said to the flat-faced man. "What kind of *locos* are we producing here?"

"I wish to aid them."

"Qué va," Pilar said. "Another romantic. Dost thou not believe thou wilt die quick enough here without useless voyages?"

Robert Jordan looked at her, at the heavy brown face with the high Indian cheekbones, the wide-set dark eyes and the laughing mouth with the heavy, bitter upper lip.

"Thou must act like a man," she said to Primitivo. "A grown man. You with your gray hairs and aIL"

"Don't joke at me," Primitivo said sullenly. "If a man has a little heart and a little imagination—"

"He should learn to control them," Pilar said. "Thou wilt die soon enough with us. There is no need to seek that with strangers. As for thy imagination. The gypsy has enough for all. What a novel he told me."

"If thou hadst seen it thou wouldst not call it a novel," Prirnitivo said. "There was a moment of great gravity."

"Qué va," Pilar said. "Some cavalry rode here and they rode away. And you all make yourselves a heroism. It is to this we have

come with so much inaction."

"And this of Sordo is not grave?" Primitivo said contemptuously now. He suffered visibly each time the firing came down the wind and he wanted either to go to the combat or have Pilar go and leave him alone.

"Total, qué?" Pilar said. "It has come so it has come. Don't lose thy *cojones* for the misfortune of another."

"Go defile thyself," Primitivo said. "There are women of a stupidity and brutality that is insupportable."

"In order to support and aid those men poorly equipped for procreation," Pilar said, "if there is nothing to see I am going."

Just then Robert Jordan heard the plane high overhead. He looked up and in the high sky it looked to be the same observation plane that he had seen earlier in the morning. Now it was returning from the direction of the lines and it was moving in the direction of the high country where EI Sordo was being attacked.

"There is the bad luck bird," Pilar said. "Will it see what goes on there?"

"Surely," Robert Jordan said. "If they are not blind."

They watched the plane moving high and silvery and steady in the sunlight. It was coming from the left and they could see the round disks of light the two propellers made.

"Keep down," Robert Jordan said.

Then the plane was overhead, its shadows passing over the open glade, the throbbing reaching its maximum of portent. Then it was past and headed toward the top of the valley. They watched it go steadily on its course until it was just out of sight and then they saw it coming back in a wide dipping circle, to circle twice over the high country and then disappear in the direction of Segovia.

Robert Jordan looked at Pilar. There was perspiration on her forehead and she shook her head. She had been holding her lower lip between her teeth.

"For each one there is something," she said. "For me it is those."

"Thou hast not caught my fear?" Primitivo said sarcastically.

"Nay," she put her hand on his shoulder. "Thou hast no fear to catch. I know that. I am sorry I joked too roughly with thee. We are all in the same caldron." Then she spoke to Robert Jordan. "I will send up food and wine. Dost need anything more?"

"Not in this moment. Where are the others?"

"Thy reserve is intact below with the horses," she grinned. "Everything is out of sight. Everything to go is ready. Maria is with thy material."

"If by any chance we *should* have aviation keep her in the cave."

"Yes, my Lord *Inglés,"* Pilar said. *"Thy* gypsy (I give him to thee) I have sent to gather mushrooms to cook with the hares. There are many mushrooms now and it seemed to me we might as well eat the hares although they would be better tomorrow or the day after."

"I think it is best to eat them," Robert Jordan said, and Pilar put her big hand on his shoulder where the strap of the submachine gun crossed his chest, then reached up and mussed his hair with her fingers. "What an *Inglés,"* Pilar said. "I will send the Maria with the *puchero* when they are cooked."

The firing from far away and above had almost died out and now there was only an occasional shot.

"You think it is over?" Pilar asked.

"No," Robert Jordan said. "From the sound that we have heard they have attacked and been beaten off. Now I would say the attackers have them surrounded. They have taken cover and they wait for the planes."

Pilar spoke to Primitivo, "Thou. Dost understand there was no intent to insult thee?"

"Ya lo sé," said Pr imitivo, "I have put up with worse than that from thee. Thou hast a vile tongue. But watch thy mouth, woman. Sordo was a good comrade of mine."

"And not of mine?" Pilar asked him. "Listen, flat face. In war

one cannot say what one feels. We have enough of our own without taking Sordo's."

Primitivo was still sullen.

"You should take a physic," Pilar told him. "Now I go to prepare the meal."

"Did you bring the documentation of the *requeté?"* Robert Jordan asked her.

"How stupid I am," she said. "I forgot it. I will send the Maria."

Chapter Twenty-Six

It was three o'clock in the afternoon before the planes came. The snow had all been gone by noon and the rocks were hot now in the sun. There were no clouds in the sky and Robert Jordan sat in the rocks with his shirt off browning his back in the sun and reading the letters that had been in the pockets of the dead cavalryman. From time to time he would stop reading to look across the open slope to the line of the timber, look over the high country above and then return to the letters. No more cavalry had appeared. At intervals there would be the sound of a shot from the direction of El Sordo's camp. But the firing was desultory.

From examining his military papers he knew the boy was from Tafalla in Navarra, twenty-one years old, unmarried, and the son of a blacksmith. His regiment was the Nth cavalry, which surprised Robert Jordan, for he had believed that regiment to be in the North. He was a Carlist, and he had been wounded at the fighting for Irun at the start of the war.

I've probably seen him run through the streets ahead of the bulls at the Feria in Pamplona, Robert Jordan thought. You never kill anyone that you want to kill in a war, he said to himself. Well, hardly ever, he amended and went on reading the letters.

The first letters he read were very formal, very carefully written and dealt almost entirely with local happenings. They were from his sister and Robert Jordan learned that everything was all right in Tafalla, that father was well, that mother was the same as always but with certain complaints about her back, that she hoped he was well and not in too great danger and she was happy he was doing

away with the Reds to liberate Spain from the domination of the Marxist hordes. Then there was a list of those boys from Tafalla who had been killed or badly wounded since she wrote last. She mentioned ten who were killed. That is a great many for a town the size of Tafalla, Robert Jordan thought.

There was quite a lot of religion in the letter and she prayed to Saint Anthony, to the Blessed Virgin of Pilar, and to other Virgins to protect him and she wanted him never to forget that he was also protected by the Sacred Heart of Jesus that he wore still, she trusted, at all times over his own heart where it had been proven innumerable—this was underlined—times to have the power of stopping bullets. She was as always his loving sister Concha.

This letter was a little stained around the edges and Robert Jordan put it carefully back with the military papers and opened a letter with a less severe handwriting. It was from the boy's *nouia.* his fiancee, and it was quietly, formally, and completely hysterical with concern for his safety. Robert Jordan read it through and then put all the letters together with the papers into his hip pocket. He did not want to read the other letters.

I guess I've done my good deed for today, he said to himself. I guess you have all right, he repeated.

"What are those you were reading?" Primitivo asked him.

"The documentation and the letters of that *requete* we shot this morning. Do you want to see it?"

"I can't read," Primitivo said. "Was there anything interesting?"

"No," Robert Jordan told him. "They are personal letters."

"How are things going where he came from? Can you tell from the letters?"

"They seem to be going all right," Robert Jordan said. "There are many losses in his town." He looked down to where the blind for the automatic rifle had been changed a little and improved after the snow melted. It looked convincing enough. He looked off across the country.

"From what town is he?" Primitivo asked.

"Tafalla," Robert Jordan told him.

All right, he said to himself. I'm sorry, if that does any good.

It doesn't, he said to himself.

All right then, drop it, he said to himself.

All right, it's dropped.

But it would not drop that easily. How many is that you have killed? he asked himself. I don't know. Do you think you have a right to kill anyone? No. But I have to. How many of those you have killed have been real fascists? Very few. But they are all the enemy to whose force we are opposing force. But you like the people of Navarra better than those of any other part of Spain. Yes. And you kill them. Yes. If you don't believe it go down there to the camp. Don't you know it is wrong to kill? Yes. But you do it? Yes. And you still believe absolutely that your cause is right? Yes.

It is right, he told himself, not reassuringly, but proudly. I believe in the people and their right to govern themselves as they wish. But you mustn't believe in killing, he told himself. You must do it as a necessity but you must not believe in it. If you believe in it the whole thing is wrong.

But how many do you suppose you have killed? I don't know because I won't keep track. But do you know? Yes. How many? You can't be sure how many. Blowing the trains you kill many. Very many. But you can't be sure. But of those you are sure of? More than twenty. And of those how many were real fascists? Two that I am sure of. Because I had to shoot them when we took them prisoners at Usera. And you did not mind that? No. Nor did you like it? No. I decided never to do it again. I have avoided it. I have avoided killing those who are unarmed.

Listen, he told himself. You better cut this out. This is very bad for you and for your work. Then himself said back to him, You listen, see? Because you are doing something very serious and I have to see you understand it all the time. I have to keep you

straight in your head. Because if you are not absolutely straight in your head you have no right to do the things you do for all of them are crimes and no man has a right to take another man's life unless it is to prevent something worse happening to other people. So get it straight and do not lie to yourself.

But I won't keep a count of people I have killed as though it were a trophy record or a disgusting business like notches in a gun, he told himself. I have a right to not keep count and I have a right to forget them.

No, himself said. You have no right to forget anything. You have no right to shut your eyes to any of it nor any right to forget any of it nor to soften it nor to change it.

Shut up, he told himself. You're getting awfully pompous.

Nor ever to deceive yourself about it, himself went on.

All right, he told himself. Thanks for all the good advice and is it all right for me to love Maria?

Yes, himself said.

Even if there isn't supposed to be any such thing as love in a purely materialistic conception of society?

Since when did you ever have any such conception? himself asked. Never. And you never could have. You're not a real Marxist and you know it. You believe in Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. You believe in Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. Don't ever kid yourself with too much dialectics. They are for some but not for you. You have to know them in order not to be a sucker. You have put many things in abeyance to win a war. If this war is lost all of those things are lost.

But afterwards you can discard what you do not believe in. There is plenty you do not believe in and plenty that you do believe in.

And another thing. Don't ever kid yourself about loving some one. It is just that most people are not lucky enough ever to have it. You never had it before and now you have it. What you have with

Maria, whether it lasts just through today and a part of tomorrow, or whether it lasts for a long life is the most important thing that can happen to a human being. There will always be people who say it does not exist because they cannot have it. But I tell you it is true and that you have it and that you are lucky even if you die tomorrow.

Cut out the dying stuff, he said to himself. That's not the way we talk. That's the way our friends the anarchists talk. Whenever things get really bad they want to set fire to something and to die. It's a very odd kind of mind they have. Very odd. Well, we're getting through today, old timer, he told himself. It's nearly three o'clock now and there is going to be some food sooner or later. They are still shooting up at Sordo's, which means that they have him surrounded and are waiting to bring up more people, probably. Though they have to make it before dark.

I wonder what it is like up at Sordo's, That's what we all have to expect, given enough time. I imagine it is not too jovial up at Sordo's. We certainly got Sordo into a fine jam with that horse business. How does it go in Spanish? *Un callejón sin salida.* A passageway with no exit. I suppose I could go through with it all right. You only have to do it once and it is soon over with. But wouldn't it be luxury to fight in a war some time where, when you were surrounded, you could surrender? *Estamos copados.* We are surrounded. That was the great panic cry of this war. Then the next thing was that you were shot; with nothing bad before if you were lucky. Sordo wouldn't be lucky that way. Neither would they when the time ever came.

It was three o'clock. Then he heard the far-off, distant throbbing and, looking up, he saw the planes.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

El Sordo was making his fight on a hilltop. He did not like this hill and when he saw it he thought it had the shape of a chancre. But he had had no choice except this hill and he had picked it as far away as he could see it and galloped for it, the automatic rifle heavy on his back, the horse laboring, barrel heaving between his thighs, the sack of grenades swinging against one side, the sack of automatic rifle pans banging against the other, and Joaquín and Ignacio halting and firing, halting and firing to give him time to get the gun in place.

There had still been snow then, the snow that had ruined them, and when his horse was hit so that he wheezed in a slow, jerking, climbing stagger up the last part of the crest, splattering the snow with a bright, pulsing jet, Sordo had hauled him along by the bridle, the reins over his shoulder as he climbed. He climbed as hard as he could with the bullets spatting on the rocks, with the two sacks heavy on his shoulders, and then, holding the horse by the mane, had shot him quickly, expertly, and tenderly just where he had needed him, so that the horse pitched, head forward down to plug a gap between two rocks. He had gotten the gun to firing over the horse's back and he fired two pans, the gun clattering, the empty shells pitching into the snow, the smell of burnt hair from the burnt hide where the hot muzzle rested, him firing at what came up to the hill, forcing them to scatter for cover, while all the time there was a chill in his back from not knowing what was behind him. Once the last of the five men had reached the hilltop the chill went out of his back and he had saved the pans he had left

until he would need them.

There were two more horses dead along the slope and three more were dead here on the hilltop. He had only succeeded in stealing three horses last night and one had bolted when they tried to mount him bareback in the corral at the camp when the first shooting had started.

Of the five men who had reached the hilltop three were wounded. Sordo was wounded in the calf of his leg and in two places in his left arm. He was very thirsty, his wounds had stiffened, and one of the wounds in his left arm was very painful. He also had a bad headache and as he lay waiting for the planes to come he thought of a joke in Spanish. It was, *"Hay que tornar fa muerte eomo si fuera aspirina,"* which means, "You will have to take death as an aspirin." But he did not make the joke aloud. He grinned somewhere inside the pain in his head and inside the nausea that came whenever he moved his arm and looked around at what there was left of his band.

The five men were spread out like the points of a five-pointed star. They had dug with their knees and hands and made mounds in front of their heads and shoulders with the dirt and piles of stones. Using this cover, they were linking the individual mounds up with stones and dirt. Joaquín , who was eighteen years old, had a steel helmet that he dug with and he passed dirt in it.

He had gotten this helmet at the blowing up of the train. It had a bullet hole through it and everyone had always joked at him for keeping it. But he had hammered the jagged edges of the bullet hole smooth and driven a wooden plug into it and then cut the plug off and smoothed it even with the metal inside the helmet.

When the shooting started he had clapped this helmet on his head so hard it banged his head as though he had been hit with a casserole and, in the last lung-aching, leg-dead, mouth-dry, bulletspatting, bullet-cracking, bullet-singing run up the final slope of the hill after his horse was killed, the helmet had seemed to

weigh a great amount and to ring his bursting forehead with an iron band. But he had kept it. Now he dug with it in a steady, almost machinelike desperation. He had not yet been hit.

"It serves for something finally," Sordo said to him in his deep, throaty voice.

"Resistir y fortificar es veneer," Joaquín said, his mouth stiff with the dryness of fear which surpassed the normal thirst of battle. It was one of the slogans of the Communist party and it meant, "Hold out and fortify, and you will win."

Sordo looked away and down the slope at where a cavalryman was sniping from behind a boulder. He was very fond of this boy and he was in no mood for slogans.

"What did you say?"

One of the men turned from the building that he was doing. This man was lying flat on his face, reaching carefully up with his hands to put a rock in place while keeping his chin flat against the ground.

Joaquín repeated the slogan in his dried-up boy›s voice without checking his digging for a moment.

"What was the last word?" the man with his chin on the ground asked.

"Veneer," the boy said. "Win."

"Mierda," the man with his chin on the ground said.

"There is another that applies to here," Joaquín said, bringing them out as though they were talismans, "Pasionaria says it is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees."

"Mierda again," the man said and another man said, over his shoulder, "We're on our bellies, not our knees."

"Thou. Communist. Do you know your Pasionaria has a son thy age in Russia since the start of the movement?"

"It's a lie," Joaquín said.

"Qué va, it's a lie," the other said. "The dynamiter with the rare name told me. He was of thy party, too. Why should he lie?"

"It's a lie," Joaquín said. "She would not do such a thing as keep

a son hidden in Russia out of the war."

"I wish I were in Russia," another ofSordo's men said. "Will not thy Pasionaria send me now from here to Russia, Communist?"

"If thou believest so much in thy Pasionaria, get her to get us off this hill," one of the men who had a bandaged thigh said.

"The fascists will do that," the man with his chin in the dirt said.

"Do not speak thus," Joaquín said to him.

"Wipe the pap of your mother's breasts off thy lips and give me a hatful of that dirt," the man with his chin on the ground said. "No one of us will see the sun go down this night."

El Sordo was thinking: It is shaped like a chancre. Or the breast of a young girl with no nipple. Or the top cone of a volcano. You have never seen a volcano, he thought. Nor will you ever see one. And this hill is like a chancre. Let the volcanos alone. It's late now for the volcanos.

He looked very carefully around the withers of the dead horse and there was a quick hammering of firing from behind a boulder well down the slope and he heard the bullets from the submachine gun thud into the horse. He crawled along behind the horse and looked out of the angle between the horse's hindquarters and the rock. There were three bodies on the slope just below him where they had fallen when the fascists had rushed the crest under cover of the automatic rifle and submachine gunfire and he and the others had broken down the attack by throwing and rolling down hand grenades. There were other bodies that he could not see on the other sides of the hill crest. There was no dead ground by which attackers could approach the summit and Sordo knew that as long as his ammunition and grenades held out and he had as many as four men they could not get him out of there unless they brought up a trench mortar. He did not know whether they had sent to La Granja for a trench mortar. Perhaps they had not, because surely, soon, the planes would come. It had been four hours since the observation plane had flown over them.

This hill is truly like a chancre, Sordo thought, and we are the very pus of it. But we killed many when they made that stupidness. How could they think that they would take us thus? They have such modern armament that they lose all their sense with overconfidence. He had killed the young officer who had led the assault with a grenade that had gone bouncing and rolling down the slope as they came up it, running, bent half over. In the yellow flash and gray roar of smoke he had seen the officer dive forward to where he lay now like a heavy, broken bundle of old clothing marking the farthest point that the assault had reached. Sordo looked at this body and then, down the hill, at the others.

They are brave but stupid people, he thought. But they have sense enough now not to attack us again until the planes come. Unless, of course, they have a mortar coming. It would be easy with a mortar. The mortar was the normal thing and he knew that they would die as soon as a mortar came up, but when he thought of the planes coming up he felt as naked on that hilltop as though all of his clothing and even his skin had been removed. There is no nakeder thing than I feel, he thought. A flayed rabbit is as well covered as a bear in comparison. But why should they bring planes? They could get us out of here with a trench mortar easily. They are proud of their planes, though, and they will probably bring them. Just as they were so proud of their automatic weapons that they made that stupidness. But undoubtedly they must have sent for a mortar, too.

One of the men fired. Then jerked the bolt and fired again, quickly.

"Save thy cartridges," Sordo said.

"One of the sons of the great whore tried to reach that boulder," the man pointed.

"Did you hit him?" Sordo asked, turning his head with difficulty.

"Nay," the man said. "The fornicator ducked back."

"Who is a whore of whores is Pilar," the man with his chin in

the dirt said. “That whore knows we are dying here.”

“She could do no good,” Sordo said. The man had spoken on the side of his good ear and he had heard him without turning his head. “What could she do?”

“Take these sluts from the rear.”

“Qué va,” Sordo said. “They are spread around a hillside. How would she come on them? There are a hundred and fifty of them. Maybe more now.”

“But if we hold out until dark,” Joaquín said.

“And if Christmas comes on Easter,” the man with his chin on the ground said.

“And if thy aunt had *cojones* she would be thy uncle,” another said to him. “Send for thy Pasionaria. She alone can help us.”

“I do not believe that about the son,” Joaquín said. “Or if he is there he is training to be an aviator or something of that sort.”

“He is hidden there for safety,” the man told him.

“He is studying dialectics. Thy Pasionaria has been there. So have Lister and Modesto and others. The one with the rare name told me.”

“That they should go to study and return to aid us,” Joaquín said.

“That they should aid us now,” another man said. “That all the cruts of Russian sucking swindlers should aid us now.” He fired and said, *“Me cago en tal;* I missed him again.”

“Save thy cartridges and do not talk so much or thou wilt be very thirsty,” Sordo said. “There is no water on this hill.”

“Take this,” the man said and rolling on his side he pulled a wineskin that he wore slung from his shoulder over his head and handed it to Sordo. “Wash thy mouth out, old one. Thou must have much thirst with thy wounds.”

“Let all take it,” Sordo said.

“Then I will have some first,” the owner said and squirted a long stream into his mouth before he handed the leather bottle around.

“Sordo, when thinkest thou the planes will come?” the man with his chin in the dirt asked.

“Any time,” said Sordo. “They should have come before.”

“Do you think these sons of the great whore will attack again?”

“Only if the planes do not come.”

He did not think there was any need to speak about the mortar. They would know it soon enough when the mortar came.

“God knows they’ve enough planes with what we saw yesterday.”

“Too many,” Sordo said.

His head hurt very much and his arm was stiffening so that the pain of moving it was almost unbearable. He looked up at the bright, high, blue early summer sky as he raised the leather wine bottle with his good arm. He was fifty-two years old and he was sure this was the last time he would see that sky.

He was not at all afraid of dying but he was angry at being trapped on this hill which was only utilizable as a place to die. If we could have gotten clear, he thought. If we could have made them come up the long valley or if we could have broken loose across the road it would have been all right. But this chancre of a hill. We must use it as well as we can and we have used it very well so far.

If he had known how many men in history have had to use a hill to die on it would not have cheered him any for, in the moment he was passing through, men are not impressed by what has happened to other men in similar circumstances any more than a widow of one day is helped by the knowledge that other loved husbands have died. Whether one has fear of it or not, one’s death is difficult to accept. Sordo had accepted it but there was no sweetness in its acceptance even at fifty-two, with three wounds and him surrounded on a hill.

He joked about it to himself but he looked at the sky and at the far mountains and he swallowed the wine and he did not want it. If one must die, he thought, and clearly one must, I can die. But I hate

it.

Dying was nothing and he had no picture of it nor fear of it in his mind. But living was a field of grain blowing in the wind on the side of a hill. Living was a hawk in the sky. Living was an earthen jar of water in the dust of the threshing with the grain flailed out and the chaff blowing. Living was a horse between your legs and a carbine under one leg and a hill and a valley and a stream with trees along it and the far side of the valley and the hills beyond.

Sordo passed the wine bottle back and nodded his head in thanks. He leaned forward and patted the dead horse on the shoulder where the muzzle of the automatic rifle had burned the hide. He could still smell the burnt hair. He thought how he had held the horse there, trembling, with the fire around them, whispering and cracking, over and around them like a curtain, and had carefully shot him just at the intersection of the cross-lines between the two eyes and the ears. Then as the horse pitched down he had dropped down behind his warm, wet back to get the gun to going as they came up the hill.

"Eras mucho caballo," he said, meaning. "Thou wert plenty of horse."

El Sordo lay now on his good side and looked up at the sky. He was lying on a heap of empty cartridge hulls but his head was protected by the rock and his body lay in the lee of the horse. His wounds had stiffened badly and he had much pain and he felt too tired to move.

"What passes with thee, old one?" the man next to him asked.

"Nothing. I am taking a little rest."

"Sleep," the other said. *"They* will wake us when they come."

Just then some one shouted from down the slope.

"Listen, bandits!" the voice came from behind the rocks where the closest automatic rifle was placed. "Surrender now before the planes blow you to pieces."

"What is it he says?" Sordo asked.

Joaquín told him. Sordo rolled to one side and pulled himself up so that he was crouched behind the gun again.

"Maybe the planes aren't coming," he said. "Don't answer them and do not fire. Maybe we can get them to attack again."

"If we should insult them a little?" the man who had spoken to Joaquín about La Pasionaria's son in Russia asked.

"No," Sordo said. "Give me thy big pistol. Who has a big pistol?"

"Here."

"Give it to me." Crouched on his knees he took the big 9 mm. Star and fired one shot into the ground beside the dead horse, waited, then fired again four times at irregular intervals. Then he waited while he counted sixty and then fired a final shot directly into the body of the dead horse. He grinned and handed back the pistol.

"Reload it," he whispered, "and that everyone should keep his mouth shut and no one shoot."

"Bandidos!" the voice shouted from behind the rocks.

No one spoke on the hill.

"Bandidos! Surrender now before we blow thee to little pieces."

"They're biting," Sordo whispered happily.

As he watched, a man showed his head over the top of the rocks. There was no shot from the hilltop and the head went down again. EI Sordo waited, watching, but nothing more happened. He turned his head and looked at the others who were all watching down their sectors of the slope. As he looked at them the others shook their heads.

"Let no one move," he whispered.

"Sons of the great whore," the voice came now from behind the rocks again.

"Red swine. Mother rapers. Eaters of the milk of thy fathers."

Sordo grinned. He could just hear the bellowed insults by turning his good ear. This is better than the aspirin, he thought. How many will we get? Can they be that foolish?

The voice had stopped again and for three minutes they heard nothing and saw no movement. Then the sniper behind the boulder a hundred yards down the slope exposed himself and fired. The bullet hit a rock and ricocheted with a sharp whine. Then Sordo saw a man, bent double, run from the shelter of the rocks where the automatic rifle was across the open ground to the big boulder behind which the sniper was hidden. He almost dove behind the boulder.

Sordo looked around. They signalled to him that there was no movement on the other slopes. EI Sordo grinned happily and shook his head. This is ten times better than the aspirin, he thought, and he waited, as happy as only a hunter can be happy.

Below on the slope the man who had run from the pile of stones to the shelter of the boulder was speaking to the sniper.

"Do you believe it?"

"I don't know," the sniper said.

"It would be logical," the man, who was the officer in command, said. "They are surrounded. They have nothing to expect but to die."

The sniper said nothing.

"What do you think?" the officer asked.

"Nothing," the sniper said.

"Have you seen any movement since the shots?"

"None at all."

The officer looked at his wrist watch. It was ten minutes to three o'clock.

"The planes should have come an hour ago," he said. Just then another officer flopped in behind the boulder. The sniper moved over to make room for him.

"Thou, Paco," the first officer said. "How does it seem to thee?"

The second officer was breathing heavily from his sprint up and across the hillside from the automatic rifle position.

"For me it is a trick," he said.

“But if it is not? What a ridicule we make waiting here and laying siege to dead men.”

“We have done something worse than ridiculous already,” the second officer said. “Look at that slope.”

He looked up the slope to where the dead were scattered close to the top. From where he looked the line of the hilltop showed the scattered rocks, the belly, projecting legs, shod hooves jutting out, of Sordo’s horse, and the fresh dirt thrown up by the digging.

“What about the mortars?” asked the second officer.

“They should be here in an hour. If not before.”

“Then wait for them. There has been enough stupidity already.”

“Bandidos!” the first officer shouted suddenly, getting to his feet and putting his head well up above the boulder so that the crest of the hill looked much closer as he stood upright. “Red swine! Cowards!”

The second officer looked at the sniper and shook his head. The sniper looked away but his lips tightened.

The first officer stood there, his head all clear of the rock and with his hand on his pistol butt. He cursed and vilified the hilltop. Nothing happened. Then he stepped clear of the boulder and stood there looking up the hill.

“Fire, cowards, if you are alive,” he shouted. “Fire on one who has no fear of any Red that ever came out of the belly of the great whore.”

This last was quite a long sentence to shout and the officer’s face was red and congested as he finished.

The second officer, who was a thin sunburned man with quiet eyes, a thin, long-lipped mouth and a stubble of beard over his hollow cheeks, shook his head again. It was this officer who was shouting who had ordered the first assault. The young lieutenant who was dead up the slope had been the best friend of this other lieutenant who was named Paco Berrendo and who was listening to the shouting of the captain, who was obviously in a state of

exaltation.

"Those are the swine who shot my sister and my mother," the captain said. He had a red face and a blond, British-looking moustache and there was something wrong about his eyes. They were a light blue and the lashes were light, too. As you looked at them they seemed to focus slowly. Then "Reds," he shouted. "Cowards!" and commenced cursing again.

He stood absolutely clear now and, sighting carefully, fired his pistol at the only target that the hiltop presented: the dead horse that had belonged to Sordo. The bullet threw up a puff of dirt fifteen yards below the horse. The captain fired again. The bullet hit a rock and sung off.

The captain stood there looking at the hilltop. The Lieutenant Berrendo was looking at the body of the other lieutenant just below the summit. The sniper was looking at the ground under his eyes. Then he looked up at the captain.

"There is no one alive up there," the captain said. "Thou," he said to the sniper, "go up there and see."

The sniper looked down. He said nothing.

"Don't you hear me?" the captain shouted at him.

"Yes, my captain," the sniper said, not looking at him.

"Then get up and go." The captain still had his pistol out. "Do you hear me?"

"Yes, my captain."

"Why don't you go, then?"

"I don't want to, my captain."

"You don't *want* to?" The captain pushed the pistol against the small of the man's back. "You don't *want* to?"

"I am afraid, my captain," the soldier said with dignity.

Lieutenant Berrendo, watching the captain's face and his odd eyes, thought he was going to shoot the man then.

"Captain Mora," he said.

"Lieutenant Berrendo?"

“It is possible the soldier is right.”

“That he is right to say he is afraid? That he is right to say he does not *want* to obey an order?”

“No. That he is right that it is a trick.”

“They are all dead,” the captain said. “Don’t you hear me say they are all dead?’

“You mean our comrades on the slope?” Berrendo asked him.

“I agree with you.”

“Paco,” the captain said, “don’t be a fool. Do you think you are the only one who cared for Julián ? I tell you the Reds are dead. Look!”

He stood up, then put both hands on top of the boulder and pulled himself up, kneeing-up awkwardly, then getting on his feet.

“Shoot,” he shouted, standing on the gray granite boulder and waved both his arms. “Shoot me! Kill me!”

On the hilltop EI Sordo lay behind the dead horse and grinned.

What a people, he thought. He laughed, trying to hold it in because the shaking hurt his arm.

“Reds,” came the shout from below. “Red canaille. Shoot me! Kill me!”

Sordo, his chest shaking, barely peeped past the horse’s crupper and saw the captain on top of the boulder waving his arms. Another officer stood by the boulder. The sniper was standing at the other side. Sordo kept his eye where it was and shook his head happily.

“Shoot me,” he said softly to himself. “Kill me!” Then his shoulders shook again. The laughing hurt his arm and each time he laughed his head felt as though it would burst. But the laughter shook him again like a spasm.

Captain Mora got down from the boulder.

“Now do you believe me, Paco?” he questioned Lieutenant Berrendo.

“No,” said Lieutenant Berrendo.

“Cojones!” the captain said. “Here there is nothing but idiots and

cowards."

The sniper had gotten carefully behind the boulder again and Lieutenant Berrendo was squatting beside him.

The captain, standing in the open beside the boulder, commenced to shout filth at the hilltop. There is no language so filthy as Spanish. There are words for all the vile words in English and there are other words and expressions that are used only in countries where blasphemy keeps pace with the austerity of religion. Lieutenant Berrendo was a very devout Catholic. So was the sniper. They were Carlists from Navarra and while both of them cursed and blasphemed when they were angry they regarded it as a sin which they regularly confessed.

As they crouched now behind the boulder watching the captain and listening to what he was shouting, they both disassociated themselves from him and what he was saying. They did not want to have that sort of talk on their consciences on a day in which they might die. Talking thus will not bring luck, the sniper thought. Speaking thus of the *Virgen* is bad luck. This one speaks worse than the Reds.

Julián is dead, Lieutenant Berrendo was thinking. Dead there on the slope on such a day as this is. And this foul mouth stands there bringing more ill fortune with his blasphemies.

Now the captain stopped shouting and turned to Lieutenant Berrendo. His eyes looked stranger than ever.

"Paco," he said, happily, "you and I will go up there."

"Not me."

"What?" The captain had his pistol out again.

I hate these pistol brandishers, Berrendo was thinking. They cannot give an order without jerking a gun out. They. probably pull out their pistols when they go to the toilet and order the move they will make.

"I will go if you order me to. But under protest," Lieutenant Berrendo told the captain.

“Then I will go alone,” the captain said. “The smell of cowardice is too strong here.”

Holding his pistol in his right hand, he strode steadily up the slope. Berrendo and the sniper watched him. He was making no attempt to take any cover and he was looking straight ahead of him at the rocks, the dead horse, and the fresh-dug dirt of the hilltop.

EI Sordo lay behind the horse at the corner of the rock, watching the captain come striding up the hill.

Only one, he thought. We get only one. But from his manner of speaking he is *caza mayor.* Look at him walking. Look what an animal. Look at him stride forward. This one is for me. This one I take with me on the trip. This one coming now makes the same voyage I do. Come on, Comrade Voyager. Come striding. Come right along. Come along to meet it. Come on. Keep on walking. Don’t slow up. Come right along. Come as thou art coming. Don’t stop and look at those. That’s right. Don’t even look down. Keep on coming with your eyes forward. Look, he has a moustache. What do you think of that? He runs to a moustache, the Comrade Voyager. He is a captain. Look at his sleeves. I said he was *caza mayor.* He has the face of an *Inglés.* Look. With a red face and blond hair and blue eyes. With no cap on and his moustache is yellow. With blue eyes. With pale blue eyes. With pale blue eyes with something wrong with them. With pale blue eyes that don’t focus. Close enough. Too close. Yes, Comrade Voyager. Take it, Comrade Voyager.

He squeezed the trigger of the automatic rifle gently and it pounded back three times against his shoulder with the slippery jolt the recoil of a tripoded automatic weapon gives.

The captain lay on his face on the hillside. His left arm was under him. His right arm that had held the pistol was stretched forward of his head. From all down the slope they were firing on the hill crest again.

Crouched behind the boulder, thinking that now he would have

to sprint across that open space under fire, Lieutenant Berrendo heard the deep hoarse voice of Sordo from the hilltop.

"Bandidos!" the voice came. *"Bandidosl* Shoot me! Kill me!"

On the top of the hill EI Sordo lay behind the automatic rifle laughing so that his chest ached, so that he thought the top of his head would burst.

"Bandidos," he shouted again happily. "Kill me, *bandidos!"* Then he shook his head happily. We have lots of company for the Voyage, he thought.

He was going to try for the other officer with the automatic rifle when he would leave the shelter of the boulder. Sooner or later he would have to leave it. Sordo knew that he could never command from there and he thought he had a very good chance to get him.

Just then the others on the hill heard the first sound of the coming of the planes.

EI Sordo did not hear them. He was covering the down-slope edge of the boulder with his automatic rifle and he was thinking: when I see him he will be running already and I will miss him if I am not careful. I could shoot behind him all across that stretch. I should swing the gun with him and ahead of him. Or let him start and then get on him and ahead of him. I will try to pick him up there at the edge of the rock and swing just ahead of him. Then he felt a touch on his shoulder and he turned and saw the gray, fear-drained face of [oaquin and he looked where the boy was pointing and saw the three planes coming.

At this moment Lieutenant Berrendo broke from behind the boulder and, with his head bent and his legs plunging, ran down and across the slope to the shelter of the rocks where the automatic rifle was placed.

Watching the planes, Sordo never saw him go.

"Help me to pull this out," he said to [oaquin and the boy dragged the automatic rifle clear from between the horse and the rock.

The planes were coming on steadily, They were in echelon and each second they grew larger and their noise was greater.

"Lie on your backs to fire at them," Sordo said. "Fire ahead of them as they come."

He was watching them all the time. *"Cabrones! Hijos de puta!"* he said rapidly.

"Ignacio!" he said. "Put the gun on the shoulder of the boy. Thou!" to Joaquín , "Sit there and do not move. Crouch over. More. No. More."

He lay back and sighted with the automatic rifle as the planes came on steadily.

"Thou, Ignacio, hold me the three legs of that tripod." They were dangling down the boy's back and the muzzle of the gun was shaking from the jerking of his body that [oaquin could not control as he crouched with bent head hearing the droning roar of their coming.

Lying flat on his belly and looking up into the sky watching them come, Ignacio gathered the legs of the tripod into his two hands and steadied the gun.

"Keep thy head down," he said to Joaquin. "Keep thy head forward."

"Pasionar ia says 'Better to die on thy-'" Joaquin was saying to himself as the drone came nearer them. Then he shifted suddenly into "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women and Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen. Holy Mary, Mother of God," he started, then he remembered quickly as the roar came now unbearably and started an act of contrition racing in it, "Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee who art worthy of all my love—"

Then there were the hammering explosions past his ears and the gun barrel hot against his shoulder. It was hammering now again and his ears were deafened by the muzzle blast. Ignacio was pulling

down hard on the tripod and the barrel was burning his back. It was hammering now in the roar and he could not remember the act of contrition.

All he could remember was at the hour of our death. Amen. At the hour of our death. Amen. At the hour. At the hour. Amen. The others all were firing. Now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Then, through the hammering of the gun, there was the whistle of the air splitting apart and then in the red black roar the earth rolled under his knees and then waved up to hit him in the face and then dirt and bits of rock were falling all over and Ignacio was lying on him and the gun was lying on him. But he was not dead because the whistle came again and the earth rolled under him with the roar. Then it came again and the earth lurched under his belly and one side of the hilltop rose into the air and then fell slowly over them where they lay.

The planes came back three times and bombed the hilltop but no one on the hilltop knew it. Then the planes machine-gunned the hilltop and went away. As they dove on the hill for the last time with their machine guns hammering, the first plane pulled up and winged over and then each plane did the same and they moved from echelon to V-formation and went away into the sky in the direction of Segovia.

Keeping a heavy fire on the hilltop, Lieutenant Berrendo pushed a patrol up to one of the bomb craters from where they could throw grenades onto the crest. He was taking no chances of anyone being alive and waiting for them in the mess that was up there and he threw four grenades into the confusion of dead horses, broken and split rocks, and torn yellow-stained explosivestinking earth before he climbed out of the bomb crater and walked over to have a look.

No one was alive on the hilltop except the boy [oaquin, who was unconscious under the dead body of Ignacio. [oaquin was bleeding from the nose and from the ears. He had known nothing and had no feeling since he had suddenly been in the very heart of the thunder

and the breath had been wrenched from his body when the one bomb struck so close and Lieutenant Berrendo made the sign of the cross and then shot him in the back of the head, as quickly and as gently, if such an abrupt movement can be gentle, as Sordo had shot the wounded horse.

Lieutenant Berrendo stood on the hilltop and looked down the slope at his own dead and then across the country seeing where they had galloped before Sordo had turned at bay here. He noticed all the dispositions that had been made of the troops and then he ordered the dead men's horses to be brought up and the bodies tied across the saddles so that they might be packed in to La Granja.

"Take that one, too," he said. "The one with his hands on the automatic rifle. That' should be Sordo. He is the oldest and it was he with the gun. No. Cut the head off and wrap it in a poncho." He considered a minute. "You might as well take all the heads. And of the others below on the slope and where we first found them. Collect the rifles and pistols and pack that gun on a horse."

Then he walked down to where the lieutenant lay who had been killed in the first assault. He looked down at him but did not touch him.

"Qué cosa mas mala es la guerra," he said to himself, which meant, "What a bad thing war is."

Then he made the sign of the cross again and as he walked down the hill he said five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys for the repose of the soul of his dead comrade. He did not wish to stay to see his orders being carried out.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

After the planes went away Robert Jordan and Primitivo heard the firing start and his heart seemed to start again with it. A cloud of smoke drifted over the last ridge that he could see in the high country and the planes were three steadily receding specks in the sky.

"They've probably bombed hell out of their own cavalry and never touched Sordo and Company," Robert Jordan said to himself. "The damned planes scare you to death but they don't kill you."

"The combat goes on," Primitivo said, listening to the heavy firing. He had winced at each bomb thud and now he licked his dry lips.

"Why not?" Robert Jordan said. "Those things never kill anybody."

Then the firing stopped absolutely and he did not hear another shot. Lieutenant Berrendo's pistol shot did not carry that far. When the firing first stopped it did not affect him. Then as the quiet kept on a hollow feeling came in his chest. Then he heard the grenades burst and for a moment his heart rose. Then everything was quiet again and the quiet kept on and he knew that it was over.

Maria came up from the camp with a tin bucket of stewed hare with mushrooms sunken in the rich gravy and a sack with bread, a leather wine bottle, four tin plates, two cups and four spoons. She stopped at the gun and ladled out two plates for Agustín and Eladio, who had replaced Anselmo at the gun, and gave them bread and unscrewed the horn tip of the wine bottle and poured two cups of wine.

Robert Jordan watched her climbing lithely up to his lookout post, the sack over her shoulder, the bucket in one hand, her cropped head bright in the sun. He climbed down and took the bucket and helped her up the last boulder.

"What did the aviation do?" she asked, her eyes frightened.

"Bombed Sordo."

He had the bucket open and was ladling out stew onto a plate.

"Are they still fighting?"

"No. It is over."

"Oh,' she said and bit her lip and looked out across the country.

"I have no appetite," Primitivo said.

"Eat anyway," Robert Jordan told him.

"I could not swallow food."

"Take a drink of this, man," Robert Jordan said and handed him the wine bottle. "Then eat."

"This of Sordo has taken away desire," Primitivo said. "Eat, thou. I have no desire."

Maria went over to him and put her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"Eat, old one," she said. "Each one should take care of his strength."

Primitivo turned away from her. He took the wine bottle and tipping his head back swallowed steadily while he squirted a jet of wine into the back of his mouth. Then he filled his plate from the bucket and commenced to eat.

Robert Jordan looked at Maria and shook his head. She sat down by him and put her arm around his shoulder. Each knew how the other felt and they sat there and Robert Jordan ate the stew, taking time to appreciate the mushrooms completely, and he drank the wine and they said nothing.

"You may stay here, *guapa,* if you want," he said after a while when the food was all eaten.

"Nay," she said. "I must go to Pilar."

"It is all right to stay here. I do not think that anything will happen now."

"Nay. I must go to Pilar. She is giving me instruction." .

"What does she give thee?"

"Instruction." She smiled at him and then kissed him. "Did you never hear of religious instruction?" She blushed. "It is something like that." She blushed again. "But different."

"Go to thy instruction," he said and patted her on the head. She smiled at him again, then said to Primitivo, "Do you want anything from below?"

"No, daughter," he said. They both saw that he was still not yet recovered.

"Salud, old one," she said to him.

"Listen," Primitivo said. "I have no fear to die but to leave them alone thus—" his voice broke.

"There was no choice," Robert Jordan told him.

"I know. But all the same."

"There was no choice," Robert Jordan repeated. "And now it is better not to speak of it."

"Yes. But there alone with no aid from us—"

"Much better not to speak of it," Robert Jordan said. "And thou, *guapa,* get thee to thy instruction."

He watched her climb down through the rocks. Then he sat there for a long time thinking and watching the high country.

Primitivo spoke to him but he did not answer. It was hot in the sun but he did not notice the heat while he sat watching the hill slopes and the long patches of pine trees that stretched up the highest slope. An hour passed and the sun was far to his left now when he saw them coming over the crest of the slope and he picked up his glasses.

The horses showed small and minute as the first two riders came into sight on the long green slope of the high hill. Then there were four more horsemen coming down, spread out across the wide hill

and then through his glasses he saw the double column of men and horses ride into the sharp clarity of his vision. As he watched them he felt sweat come from his armpits and run down his flanks. One man rode at the head of the column. Then came more horsemen. Then came the riderless horses with their burdens tied across the saddles. Then there were two riders. Then came the wounded with men walking by them as they rode. Then came more cavalry to close the column.

Robert Jordan watched them ride down the slope and out of sight into the timber. He could not see at that distance the load one saddle bore of a long rolled poncho tied at each end and at intervals so that it bulged between each lashing as a pod bulges with peas. This was tied across the saddle and at each end it was lashed to the stirrup leathers. Alongside this on the top of the saddle the automatic rifle Sordo had served was lashed arrogantly.

Lieutenant Berrendo, who was riding at the head of the column, his flankers out, his point pushed well forward, felt no arrogance. He felt only the hollowness that comes after action. He was thinking: taking the heads is barbarous. But proof and identification is necessary. I will have trouble enough about this as it is and who knows? This of the heads may appeal to them. There are those of them who like such things. It is possible they will send them all to Burgos. It is a barbarous business. The planes were *muchos.* Much. Much. But we could have done it all, and almost without losses, with a Stokes mortar. Two mules to carry the shells and a mule with a mortar on each side of the pack saddle. What an army we would be then! With the fire power of all these automatic weapons. And another mule. No, two mules to carry ammunition. Leave it alone, he told himself. It is no longer cavalry. Leave it alone. You're building yourself an army. Next you will want a mountain gun.

Then he thought of Julián , dead on the hill, dead now, tied across a horse there in the first troop, and as he rode down into the dark pine forest, leaving the sunlight behind him on the hill, riding

now in the quiet dark of the forest, he started to say a prayer for him again.

"Hail, holy queen mother of mercy," he started. "Our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we send up our sighs, mournings and weepings in this valley of tears—"

He went on with the prayer, the horses' hooves soft on the fallen pine needles, the light coming through the tree trunks in patches as it comes through the columns of a cathedral, and as he prayed he looked ahead to see his flankers riding through the trees.

He rode out of the forest onto the yellow road that led into La Granja and the horses' hooves raised a dust that hung over them as they rode. It powdered the dead who were tied face down across the saddles and the wounded, and those who walked beside them, were in thick dust.

It was here that Anselmo saw them ride past in their dust.

He counted the dead and the wounded and he recognized Sordo's automatic rifle. He did not know what the poncho-wrapped bundle was which flapped against the led horse's flanks as the stirrup leathers swung but when, on his way home, he came in the dark onto the hill where Sordo had fought, he knew at once what the long poncho roll contained. In the dark he could not tell who had been up on the hill. But he counted those that lay there and then made off across the hills for Pablo's camp.

Walking alone in the dark, with a fear like a freezing of his heart from the feeling the holes of the bomb craters had given him, from them and from what he had found on the hill, he put all thought of the next day out of his mind. He simply walked as fast as he could to bring the news. And as he walked he prayed for the souls of Sordo and of all his band. It was the first time he had prayed since the start of the movement.

"Most kind, most sweet, most clement Virgin," he prayed.

But he could not keep from thinking of the next day finally. So he thought: I will do exactly as the *Inglés* says and as he says to do

it. But let me be close to him, 0 Lord, and may his instructions be exact for I do not think that I could control myself under the bombardment of the planes. Help me, 0 Lord, tomorrow to comport myself as a man should in his last hours. Help me, 0 Lord, to understand clearly the needs of the day. Help me, 0 Lord, to dominate the movement of my legs that I should not run when the bad moment comes. Help me, 0 Lord, to comport myself as a man tomorrow in the day of battle. Since I have asked this aid of thee, please grant it, knowing I would not ask it if it were not serious, and I will ask nothing more of thee again.

Walking in the dark alone he felt much better from having prayed and he was sure, now, that he would comport himself well. Walking now down from the high country, he went back to praying for the people of Sordo and in a short time he had reached the upper post where Fernando challenged him.

"It is I," he answered, "Anselmo."

"Good," Fernando said.

"You know of this of Sordo, old one?" Anselmo asked Fernando, the two of them standing at the entrance of the big rocks in the dark.

"Why not?" Fernando said. "Pablo has told us."

"He was up there?"

"Why not?" Fernando said stolidly. "He visited the hill as soon as the cavalry left."

"He told you—"

"He told us all," Fernando said. "What barbarians these fascists are! We must do away with all such barbarians in Spain." He stopped, then said bitterly, "In them is lacking all conception of dignity."

Anselmo grinned in the dark. An hour ago he could not have imagined that he would ever smile again. What a marvel, that Fernando, he thought.

"Yes," he said to Fernando. "We must teach them. We must take

away their planes, their automatic weapons, their tanks, their artillery and teach them dignity."

"Exactly," Fernando said. "I am glad that you agree."

Anselmo left him standing there alone with his dignity and went on down to the cave.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Anselmo found Robert Jordan sitting at the plank table inside the cave with Pablo opposite him. They had a bowl poured full of wine between them and each had a cup of wine on the table. Robert Jordan had his notebook out and he was holding a pencil. Pilar and Maria were in the back of the cave out of sight. There was no way for Anselmo to know that the woman was keeping the girl back there to keep her from hearing the conversation and he thought that it was odd that Pilar was not at the table.

Robert Jordan looked up as Anselmo came in under the blanket that hung over the opening. Pablo stared straight at the table. His eyes were focused on the wine bowl but he was not seeing it.

"I come from above," Anselmo said to Robert Jordan.

"Pablo has told us," Robert Jordan said.

"There were six dead on the hill and they had taken the heads," Anselmo said. "I was there in the dark."

Robert Jordan nodded. Pablo sat there looking at the wine bowl and saying nothing. There was no expression on his face and his small pig-eyes were looking at the wine bowl as though he had never seen one before.

"Sit down," Robert Jordan said to Anselmo.

The old man sat down at the table on one of the hide-covered stools and Robert Jordan reached under the table and brought up the pinch-bottle of whiskey that had been the gift of Sordo. It was about half-full. Robert Jordan reached down the table for a cup and poured a drink of whiskey into it and shoved it along the table to Anselmo.

“Drink that, old one,” he said.

Pablo looked from the wine bowl to Anselmo’s face as he drank and then he looked back at the wine bowl.

As Anselmo swallowed the whiskey he felt a burning in his nose, his eyes and his mouth, and then a happy, comforting warmth in his stomach. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand.

Then he looked at Robert Jordan and said, “Can I have another?”

“Why not?” Robert Jordan said and poured another drink from the bottle and handed it this time instead of pushing it.

This time there was not the burning when he swallowed but the warm comfort doubled. It was as good a thing for his spirit as a saline injection is for a man who has suffered a great hemorrhage.

The old man looked toward the bottle again.

“The rest is for tomorrow,” Robert Jordan said. “What passed on the road, old one?”

“There was much movement,” Anselmo said. “I have it all noted down as you showed me. I have one watching for me and noting now. Later I will go for her report.”

“Did you see anti-tank guns? Those on rubber tires with the long barrels?”

“Yes,” Anselmo said. “There were four camions which passed on the road. In each of them there was such a gun with pine branches spread across the barrels. In the trucks rode six men with each gun.”

“Four guns, you say?” Robert Jordan asked him.

“Four,” Anselmo said. He did not look at his papers.

“Tell me what else went up the road.”

While Robert Jordan noted Anselmo told him everything he had seen move past him on the road. He told it from the beginning and in order with the wonderful memory of those who cannot read or write, and twice, while he was talking, Pablo reached out for more wine from the bowl.

“There was also the cavalry which entered La Granja from the high country where EI Sordo fought,” Anselmo went on.

Then he told the number of the wounded he had seen and the number of the dead across the saddles.

“There was a bundle packed across one saddle that I did not understand,” he said. “But now I know it was the heads.” He went on without pausing. “It was a squadron of cavalry. They had only one officer left. He was not the one who was here in the early morning when you were by the gun. He must have been one of the dead. Two of the dead were officers by their sleeves. They were lashed face down over the saddles, their arms hanging. Also they had the *máquina* of EI Sordo tied to the saddle that bore the heads. The barrel was bent. That is all,” he finished.

“It is enough,” Robert Jordan said and dipped his cup into the wine bowl. “Who beside you has been through the lines to the side of the Republic?”

“Andrés and Eladio.”

“Which is the better of those two?”

“Andrés.”

“How long would it take him to get to Navacerrada from here?”

“Carrying no pack and taking his precautions, in three hours with luck. We came by a longer, safer route because of the material.”

“He can surely make it?”

“No sé, there is no such thing as surely.”

“Not for thee either?”

“Nay.”

That decides that, Robert Jordan thought to himself. If he had said that he could make it surely, surely I would have sent him.

“Andrés can get there as well as thee?”

“As well or better. He is younger.”

“But this must absolutely get there.”

“If nothing happens he will get there. If anything happens it

could happen to anyone."

"I will write a dispatch and send it by him," Robert Jordan said. "I will explain to him where he can find the General. He will be at the Estado Mayor of the Division."

"He will not understand all this of divisions and all," Anselmo said. "Always has it confused me. He should have the name of the General and where he can be found."

"But it is at the Estado Mayor of the Division that he will be found."

"But is that not a place?"

"Certainly it is a place, old one," Robert Jordan explained patiently.

"But it is a place the General will have selected. It is where he will make his headquarters for the battle."

"Where is it then?" Anselmo was tired and the tiredness was making him stupid. Also words like Brigades, Divisions, Army Corps confused him. First there had been columns, then there were regiments, then there were brigades. Now there were brigades and divisions, both. He did not understand. A place was a place.

"Take it slowly, old one," Robert Jordan said. He knew that if he could not make Anselmo understand he could never explain it clearly to Andrés either. "The Estado Mayor of the Division is a place the General will have picked to set up his organization to command. He commands a division, which is two brigades. I do not know where it is because I was not there when it was picked. It will probably be a cave or dugout, a refuge, and wires will run to it. Andrés must ask for the General and for the Estado Mayor of the Division. He must give this to the General or to the Chief of his Estado Mayor or to another whose name I will write. One of them will surely be there even if the others are out inspecting the preparations for the attack. Do you understand now?"

"Yes."

"Then get Andrés and I will write it now and seal it with this

seal'" He showed him the small, round, wooden-backed rubber stamp with the seal of the S.I.M. and the round, tin-covered inking pad no bigger than a fifty-cent piece he carried in his pocket. "That seal they will honor. Get Andrés now and I will explain to him. He must go quickly but first he must understand."

"He will understand if I do. But you must make it very clear. This of staffs and divisions is a mystery to me. Always have I gone to such things as definite places such as a house. In Navacerrada it is in the old hotel where the place of command is. In Guadarrama it is in a house with a garden."

"With this General," Robert Jordan said, "it will be some place very close to the lines. It will be underground to protect from the planes. Andrés will find it easily by asking, if he knows what to ask for. He will only need to show what I have written. But fetch him now for this should get there quickly."

Anselmo went out, ducking under the hanging blanket. Robert Jordan commenced writing in his notebook.

"Listen, *Inglés,"* Pablo said, still looking at the wine bow\.

"I am writing," Robert Jordan said without looking up.

"Listen, *Inglés,"* Pablo spoke directly to the wine bow\. "There is no need to be disheartened in this. Without Sordo we have plenty of people to take the posts and blow thy bridge."

"Good," Robert Jordan said without stopping writing.

"Plenty," Pablo said. "I have admired thy judgment much today, *Inglés,"* Pablo told the wine bowl. "I think thou hast much *picardia.* That thou art smarter than I am. I have confidence in thee."

Concentrating on his report to Golz, trying to put it in the fewest words and still make it absolutely convincing, trying to put it so the attack would be cancelled, absolutely, yet convince them he wasn't trying to have it called off because of any fears he might have about the danger of his own mission, but wished only to put them in possession of all the facts, Robert Jordan was hardly half listening.

"Inglés," Pablo said.

"I am writing," Robert Jordan told him without looking up.

I probably should send two copies, he thought. But if I do we will not have enough people to blow it if I have to blow it. What do I know about why this attack is made? Maybe it is only a holding attack. Maybe they want to draw those troops from somewhere else. Perhaps they make it to draw those planes from the North. Maybe that is what it is about. Perhaps it is not expected to succeed. What do I know about it? This is my report to Golz. I do not blow the bridge until the attack starts. My orders are clear and if the attack is called off I blow nothing. But I've got to keep enough people here for the bare minimum necessary to carry the orders out.

"What did you say?" he asked Pablo.

"That I have confidence, *Inglés.*" Pablo was still addressing the wine bowl.

Man, I wish I had, Robert Jordan thought. He went on writing.

Chapter Thirty

So now everything had been done that there was to do that night. All orders had been given. Everyone knew exactly what he was to do in the morning. Andrés had been gone three hours. Either it would come now with the coming of the daylight or it would not come. I believe that it will come, Robert Jordan told himself, walking back down from the upper post where he had gone to speak to Primitivo.

Golz makes the attack but he has not the power to cancel it. Permission to cancel it will have to come from Madrid. The chances are they won't be able to wake anybody up there and if they do wake up they will be too sleepy to think. I should have gotten word to Golz sooner of the preparations they have made to meet the attack, but how could I send word about something until it happened? They did not move up that stuff until just at dark. They did not want to have any movement on the road spotted by planes. But what about all their planes? What about those fascist planes?

Surely our people must have been warned by them. But perhaps the fascists were faking for another offensive down through Guadalajara with them. There were supposed to be Italian troops concentrated in Soria, and at Siguenza again besides those operating in the North. They haven't enough troops or material to run two major offensives at the same time though. That is impossible; so it must be just a bluff.

But we know how many troops the Italians have landed all last month and the month before at Cadiz. It is always possible they will try again at Guadalajara, not stupidly as before, but with three main

fingers coming down to broaden it out and carry it along the railway to the west of the plateau. There was a way that they could do it all right. Hans had shown him. They made many mistakes the first time. The whole conception was unsound. They had not used any of the same troops in the Arganda offensive against the Madrid-Valencia road that they used at Guadalajara. Why had they not made those same drives simultaneously? Why? Why? When would we know why?

Yet we had stopped them both times with the very same troops. We never could have stopped them if they had pulled both drives at once. Don't worry, he told himself. Look at the miracles that have happened before this. Either you will have to blow that bridge in the morning or you will not have to. But do not start deceiving yourself into thinking you won't have to blow it. You will blow it one day or you will blow it another. Or if it is not this bridge it will be some other bridge. It is not you who decides what shall be done. You follow orders. Follow them and do not try to think beyond them.

The orders on this are very clear. Too very clear. But you must not worry nor must you be frightened. For if you allow yourself the luxury of normal fear that fear will infect those who must work with you.

But that heads business was quite a thing all the same, he told himself. And the old man running onto them on the hilltop alone. How would you have liked to run onto them like that? That impressed you, didn't it? Yes, that impressed you, Jordan. You have been quite impressed more than once today. But you have behaved O.K. So far you have behaved all right.

You do very well for an instructor in Spanish at the University of Montana, he joked at himself. You do all right for that. But do not start to thinking that you are anything very special. You haven't gotten very far in this business. Just remember Duran, who never had any military training and who was a composer and lad about

town before the movement and is now a damned good general commanding a brigade. It was all as simple and easy to learn and understand to Duran as chess to a child chess prodigy. You had read on and studied the art of war ever since you were a boy and your grandfather had started you on the American Civil War. Except that Grandfather always called it the War of the Rebellion. But compared with Duran you were like a good sound chess player against a boy prodigy. Old Duran. It would be good to see Duran again. He would see him at Gaylord's after this was over. Yes. After this was over. See how well he was behaving?

I'll see him at Gaylord's, he said to himself again, after this is over. Don't kid yourself, he said. You do it all perfectly O.K. Cold. Without kidding yourself. You aren't going to see Duran any more and it is of no importance. Don't be that way either, he told himself. Don't go in for any of those luxuries.

Nor for heroic resignation either. We do not want any citizens full of heroic resignation in these hills. Your grandfather fought four years in our Civil War and you are just finishing your first year in this war. You have a long time to go yet and you are very well fitted for the work. And now you have Maria, too. Why, you've got everything. You shouldn't worry. What is a little brush between a guerilla band and a squadron of cavalry? That isn't anything. What if they took the heads? Does that make any difference? None at all.

The Indians always took the scalps when Grandfather was at Fort Kearny after the war. Do you remember the cabinet in your father's office with the arrowheads spread out on a shelf, and the eagle feathers of the war bonnets that hung on the wall, their plumes slanting, the smoked buckskin smell of the leggings and the shirts and the feel of the beaded moccasins? Do you remember the great stave of the buffalo bow that leaned in a corner of the cabinet and the two quivers of hunting and war arrows, and how the bundle of shafts felt when you closed your hand around them?

Remember something like that. Remember something concrete

and practical. Remember Grandfather's saber, bright and well oiled in its dented scabbard and Grandfather showed you how the blade had been thinned from the many times it had been to the grinder's. Remember Grandfather's Smith and Wesson. It was a single action, officer's model .32 caliber and there was no trigger guard. It had the softest, sweetest trigger pull you had ever felt and it was always well oiled and the bore was clean although the finish was all worn off and the brown metal of the barrel and the cylinder was worn smooth from the leather of the holster. It was kept in the holster with a U.S. on the Rap in a drawer in the cabinet with its cleaning equipment and two hundred rounds of cartridges. Their cardboard boxes were wrapped and tied neatly with waxed twine.

You could take the pistol out of the drawer and hold it. "Handle it freely," was Grandfather's expression. But you could not play with it because it was "a serious weapon."

You asked Grandfather once if he had ever killed anyone with it and he said, "Yes."

Then you said, "When, Grandfather?" and he said, "In the War of the Rebellion and afterwards."

You said, "Will you tell me about it, Grandfather?"

And he said, "I do not care to speak about it, Robert."

Then after your father had shot himself with this pistol, and you had come home from school and they'd had the funeral, the coroner had returned it after the inquest saying, "Bob, I guess you might want to keep the gun. I'm supposed to hold it, but I know your dad set a lot of store by it because his dad packed it all through the War, besides out here when he first came out with the Cavalry, and it's still a hell of a good gun. I had her out trying her this afternoon. She don't throw much of a slug but you can hit things with her."

He had put the gun back in the drawer in the cabinet where it belonged, but the next day he took it out and he had ridden up to the top of the high country above Red Lodge, with Chub, where they had built the road to Cooke City now over the pass and across

the Bear Tooth plateau, and up there where the wind was thin and there was snow all summer on the hills they had stopped by the lake which was supposed to be eight hundred feet deep and was a deep green color, and Chub held the two horses and he climbed out on a rock and leaned over and saw his face in the still water, and saw himself holding the gun, and then he dropped it, holding it by the muzzle, and saw it go down making bubbles until it was just as big as a watch charm in that clear water, and then it was out of sight. Then he came back off the rock and when he swung up into the saddle he gave old Bess such a clout with the spurs she started to buck like an old rocking horse. He bucked her out along the shore of the lake and as soon as she was reasonable they went on back along the trail.

"I know why you did that with the old gun, Bob," Chub said.

"Well, then we don't have to talk about it," he had said.

They never talked about it and that was the end of Grandfather's side arms except for the saber. He still had the saber in his trunk with the rest of his things at Missoula.

I wonder what Grandfather would think of this situation, he thought. Grandfather was a hell of a good soldier, everybody said. They said if he had been with Custer that day he never would have let him be sucked in that way. How could he ever not have seen the smoke nor the dust of all those lodges down there in the draw along the Little Big Horn unless there must have been a heavy morning mist? But there wasn't any mist.

I wish Grandfather were here instead of me. Well, maybe we will all be together by tomorrow night. If there should be any such damn fool business as a hereafter, and I'm sure there isn't, he thought, I would certainly like to talk to him. Because there are a lot of things I would like to know. I have a right to ask him now because I have had to do the same sort of things myself. I don't think he'd mind my asking now. I had no right to ask before. I understand him not telling me because he didn't know me. But now

I think that we would get along all right. I'd like to be able to talk to him now and get his advice. Hell, if I didn't get advice I'd just like to talk to him. It's a shame there is such a jump in time between ones like us.

Then, as he thought, he realized that if there was any such thing as ever meeting, both he and his grandfather would be acutely embarrassed by the presence of his father. Anyone has a right to do it, he thought. But it isn't a good thing to do. I understand it, but I do not approve of it. *Lache* was the word. But you *do* understand it? Sure, I understand it but. Yes, but. You have to be awfully occupied with yourself to do a thing like that.

Aw hell, I wish Grandfather was here, he thought. For about an hour anyway. Maybe he sent me what little I have through that other one that misused the gun. Maybe that is the only communication that we have. But, damn it. Truly damn it, but I wish the time-lag wasn't so long so that I could have learned from him what the other one never had to teach me. But suppose the fear he had to go through and dominate and just get rid of finally in four years of that and then in the Indian fighting, although in that, mostly, there couldn't have been so much fear, had made a *cobarde* out of the other one the way second generation bullfighters almost always are? Suppose that? And maybe the good juice only came through straight again after passing through that one?

I'll never forget how sick it made me the first time I knew he was a *cobarde.* Go on, say it in English. Coward. It's easier when you have it said and there is never any point in referring to a son of a bitch by some foreign term. He wasn't any son of a bitch, though. He was just a coward and that was the worst luck any man could have. Because if he wasn't a coward he would have stood up to that woman and not let her bully him. I wonder what I would have been like if he had married a different woman? That's something you'll never know, he thought, and grinned. Maybe the bully in her helped to supply what was missing in the other. And you. Take it a

little easy. Don't get to referring to the good juice and such other things until you are through tomorrow. Don't be snotty too soon. And then don't be snotty at all. We'll see what sort of juice you have tomorrow.

But he started thinking about Grandfather again.

"George Custer was not an intelligent leader of cavalry, Robert," his grandfather had said. "He was not even an intelligent man."

He remembered that when his grandfather said that he felt resentment that anyone should speak against that figure in the buckskin shirt, the yellow curls blowing, that stood on that hill holding a service revolver as the Sioux closed in around him in the old Anheuser-Busch lithograph that hung on the poolroom wall in Red Lodge.

"He just had great ability to get himself in and out of trouble," his grandfather went on, "and on the Little Big Horn he got into it but he couldn't get out.

"Now Phil Sheridan was an intelligent man and so was [eb Stuart. But John Mosby was the finest cavalry leader that ever lived."

He had a letter in his things in the trunk at Missoula from General Phil Sheridan to old Killy-the-Horse Kilpatrick that said his grandfather was a finer leader of irregular cavalry than John Mosby.

I ought to tell Golz about my grandfather, he thought. He wouldn't ever have heard of him though. He probably never even heard of John Mosby. The British all had heard of them though because they had to study our Civil War much more than people did on the Continent. Karkov said after this was over I could go to the Lenin Institute in Moscow if I wanted to. He said I could go to the military academy of the Red Army if I wanted to do that. I wonder what Grandfather would think of that? Grandfather, who never knowingly sat at table with a Democrat in his life.

Well, I don't want to be a soldier, he thought. I know that. So

that's out. I just want us to win this war. I guess really good soldiers are really good at very little else, he thought. That's obviously un true. Look at Napoleon and Wellington. You're very stupid this evening, he thought.

Usually his mind was very good company and tonight it had been when he thought about his grandfather. Then thinking of his father had thrown him off. He understood his father and he forgave him everything and he pitied him but he was ashamed of him.

You better not think at all, he told himself. Soon you will be with Maria and you won't have to think. That's the best way now that everything is worked out. When you have been concentrating so hard on something you can't stop and your brain gets to racing like a flywheel with the weight gone. You better just not think.

But just suppose, he thought. Just suppose that when the planes unload they smash those anti-tank guns and just blow hell out of the positions and the old tanks roll good up whatever hill it is for once and old Golz boots that bunch of drunks, *clochards,* bums, fanatics and heroes that make up the Quatorzierne Brigade ahead of him, and I *know* how good Duran's people are in Golz's other brigade, and we are in Segovia tomorrow night.

Yes. Just suppose, he said to himself. I'll settle for La Granja, he told himself. But you are going to have to blow that bridge, he suddenly knew absolutely. There won't be any calling off. Because the way you have just been supposing there for a minute is how the possibilities of that attack look to those who have ordered it. Yes, you will have to blow the bridge, he knew truly. Whatever happens to Andrés doesn't matter.

Coming down the trail there in the dark, alone with the good feeling that everything that had to be done was over for the next four hours, and with the confidence that had come from thinking back to concrete things, the knowledge that he would surely have to blow the bridge came to him almost with comfort.

The uncertainty, the enlargement of the feeling of being

uncertain, as when, through a misunderstanding of possible dates, one does not know whether the guests are really coming to a party, that had been with him ever since he had dispatched Andrés with the report to Golz, had all dropped from him now. He was sure now that the festival would not be cancelled. It's much better to be sure, he thought. It's always much better to be sure.

Chapter Thirty-One

So now they were in the robe again together and it was late in the last night. Maria lay close against him and he felt the long smoothness of her thighs against his and her breasts like two small hills that rise out of the long plain where there is a well, and the far country beyond the hills was the valley of her throat where his lips were. He lay very quiet and did not think and she stroked his head with her hand.

"Roberto," Maria said very softly and kissed him. "I am ashamed. I do not wish to disappoint thee but there is a great soreness and much pain. I do not think I would be any good to thee."

"There is always a great soreness and much pain," he said. "Nay, rabbit. That is nothing. We will do nothing that makes pain."

"It is not that. It is that I am not good to receive thee as I wish to."

"That is of no importance. That is a passing thing. We are together when we lie together."

"Yes, but I am ashamed. I think it was from when things were done to me that it comes. Not from thee and me."

"Let us not talk of that."

"Nor do I wish to. I meant I could not bear to fail thee now on this night and so I sought to excuse myself."

"Listen, rabbit," he said. "All such things pass and then there is no problem." But he thought; it was not good luck for the last night.

Then he was ashamed and said, "Lie close against me, rabbit. I love thee as much feeling thee against me in here in the dark as I

love thee making love."

"I am deeply ashamed because I thought it might be again tonight as it was in the high country when we came down from EI Sordo's."

"Qué va," he said to her. "That is not for every day. I like it thus as well as the other." He lied, putting aside disappointment. "We will be here together quietly and we will sleep. Let us talk together. I know thee very little from talking."

"Should we speak of tomorrow and of thy work? I would like to be intelligent about thy work."

"No," he said and relaxed completely into the length of the robe and lay now quietly with his cheek against her shoulder, his left arm under her head. "The most intelligent is not to talk about tomorrow nor what happened today. In this we do not discuss the losses and what we must do tomorrow we will do. Thou art not afraid?"

"Qué va," she said. "I am always afraid. But now I am afraid for thee so much I do not think of me."

"Thou must not, rabbit. I have been in many things. And worse than this," he lied.

Then suddenly surrendering to something, to the luxury of going into unreality, he said, "Let us talk of Madrid and of us in Madrid."

"Good," she said. Then, "Oh, Roberto, I am sorry I have failed thee. Is there not some other thing that I can do for thee?"

He stroked her head and kissed her and then lay close and relaxed beside her, listening to the quiet of the night.

"Thou canst talk with me of Madrid," he said and thought: I'll keep any oversupply of that for tomorrow. I'll need all of that there is tomorrow. There are no pine needles that need that now as I will need it tomorrow. Who was it cast his seed upon the ground in the Bible? Onan. How did Onan turn out? he thought. I don't remember ever hearing any more about Onan. He smiled in the dark.

Then he surrendered again and let himself slip into it, feeling a

voluptuousness of surrender into unreality that was like a sexual acceptance of something that could come in the night when there was no understanding, only the delight of acceptance.

"My beloved," he said, and kissed her. "Listen. The other night I was thinking about Madrid and I thought how I would get there and leave thee at the hotel while I went up to see people at the hotel of the Russians. But that was false. I would not leave thee at any hotel."

"Why not?"

"Because I will take care of thee. I will not ever leave thee. I will go with thee to the Seguridad to get papers. Then I will go with thee to buy those clothes that are needed."

"They are few, and I can buy them."

"Nay, they are many and we will go together and buy good ones and thou wilt be beautiful in them."

"I would rather we stayed in the room in the hotel and sent out for the clothes. Where is the hotel?"

"It is on the Plaza del Callao. We will be much in that room in that hotel. There is a wide bed with clean sheets and there is hot running water in the bathtub and there are two closets and I will keep my things in one and thou wilt take the other. And there are tall, wide windows that open, and outside, in the streets, there is the spring. Also I know good places to eat that are illegal but with good food, and I know shops where there is still wine and whiskey. And we will keep things to eat in the room for when we are hungry and also whiskey for when I wish a drink and I will buy thee manzanilla."

"I would like to try the whiskey."

"But since it is difficult to obtain and if thou likest manzanilla."

"Keep thy whiskey, Roberto," she said "Oh, I love thee very much. Thou and thy whiskey that I could not have. What a pig thou art."

"Nay, you shall try it. But it is not good for a woman."

"And I have only had things that were good for a woman," Maria said. "Then there in bed I will still wear my wedding shirt?"

"Nay. I will buy thee various nightgowns and pajamas too if you should prefer them."

"I will buy seven wedding shirts," she said. "One for each day of the week. And I will buy a clean wedding shirt for thee. Dost ever wash thy shirt?"

"Sometimes."

"I will keep everything clean and I will pour thy whiskey and put the water in it as it was done at Sordo's. I will obtain olives and salted codfish and hazel nuts for thee to eat while thou drinkest and we will stay in the room for a month and never leave it. If I am fit to receive thee," she said, suddenly unhappy.

"That is nothing," Robert Jordan told her. "Truly it is nothing. It is possible thou wert hurt there once and now there is a scar that makes a further hurting. Such a thing is possible. All such things pass. And also there are good doctors in Madrid if there is truly anything."

"But all was good before," she said pleadingly.

"That is the promise that all will be good again."

"Then let us talk again about Madrid." She curled her legs between his and rubbed the top of her head against his shoulder. "But will I not be so ugly there with this cropped head that thou wilt be ashamed of me?"

"Nay. Thou art lovely. Thou hast a lovely face and a beautiful body, long and light, and thy skin is smooth and the color of burnt gold and everyone will try to take thee from me."

"Qué va, take me from thee," she said. "No other man will ever touch me till I die. Take me from thee! *Qué va."*

"But many will try. Thou wilt see."

"They will see I love thee so that they will know it would be as unsafe as putting their hands into a caldron of melted lead to touch me. But thou? When thou seest beautiful women of the same

culture as thee? Thou wilt not be ashamed of me?"

"Never. And I will marry thee."

"If you wish," she said. "But since we no longer have the Church I do not think it carries importance."

"I would like us to be married."

"If you wish. But listen. If we were ever in another country where there still was the Church perhaps we could be married in it there."

"In my country they still have the Church," he told her. "There we can be married in it if it means aught to thee. I have never been married. There is no problem."

"I am glad thou hast never been married," she said. "But I am glad thou knowest about such things as you have told me for that means thou hast been with many women and the Pilar told me that it is only such men who are possible for husbands. But thou wilt not run with other women now? Because it would kill me."

"I have never run with many women," he said, truly. "Until thee I did not think that I could love one deeply." . She stroked his cheeks and then held her hands clasped behind his head. "Thou must have known very many."

"Not to love them."

"Listen. The Pilar told me something—"

"Say it."

"No. It is better not to. Let us talk again about Madrid."

"What was it you were going to say?"

"I do not wish to say it."

"Perhaps it would be better to say it if it could be important."

"You think it is important?"

"Yes."

"But how can you know when you do not know what it is?"

"From thy manner."

"I will not keep it from you then. The Pilar told me that we would all die tomorrow and that you know it as well as she does

and that you give it no importance. She said this not in criticism but in admiration."

"She said that?" he said. The crazy bitch, he thought, and he said, "That is more of her gypsy manure. That is the way old market women and cafe cowards talk. That is manuring obscenity." He felt the sweat that came from under his armpits and slid down between his arm and his side and he said to himself, "So you are scared, eh?" and aloud he said, "She is a manure-mouthed superstitious bitch. Let us talk again of Madrid."

"Then you know no such thing?"

"Of course not. Do not talk such manure," he said, uSing a stronger, ugly word.

But this time when he talked about Madrid there was no slipping into make-believe again. Now he was just lying to his girl and to himself to pass the night before battle and he knew it. He liked to do it, but all the luxury of the acceptance was gone. But he started again.

"I have thought about thy hair," he said. "And what we can do about it. You see it grows now all over thy head the same length like the fur of an animal and it is lovely to feel and I love it very much and it is beautiful and it flattens and rises like a wheatfield in the wind when I pass my hand over it."

"Pass thy hand over it."

He did and left his hand there and went on talking to her throat, as he felt his own throat swell. "But in Madrid I thought we could go together to the coiffeur's and they could cut it neatly on the sides and in the back as they cut mine and that way it would look better in the town while it is growing out."

"I would look like thee," she said and held him close to her. "And then I never would want to change it."

"Nay. It will grow all the time and that will only be to keep it neat at the start while it is growing long. How long will it take it to grow long?"

“Really long?”

“No. I mean to thy shoulders. It is thus I would have thee wear it.”

“As Garbo in the cinema?”

“Yes,” he said thickly.

Now the making believe was coming back in a great rush and he would take it all to him. It had him now, and again he surrendered and went on. “So it will hang straight to thy shoulders and curl at the ends as a wave of the sea curls, and it will be the color of ripe wheat and thy face the color of burnt gold and thine eyes the only color they could be with thy hair and thy skin, gold with the dark flecks in them, and I will push thy head back and look in thy eyes and hold thee tight against me—”

“Where?”

“Anywhere. Wherever it is that we are. How long will it take for thy hair to grow?”

“I do not know because it never had been cut before. But I think in six months it should be long enough to hang well below my ears and in a year as long as thou couldst ever wish. But do you know what will happen first?”

“Tell me.”

“We will be in the big clean bed in thy famous room in our famous hotel and we will sit in the famous bed together and look into the mirror of the *armoire* and there will be thee and there will be me in the glass and then I will turn to thee thus, and put my arms around thee thus, and then I will kiss thee thus.”

Then they lay quiet and close together in the night, hot-aching, rigid, close together and holding her, Robert Jordan held closely too all those things that he knew could never happen, and he went on with it deliberately and said, “Rabbit, we will not always live in that hotel.”

“Why not?”

“We can get an apartment in Madrid on that street that runs

along the Parque of the Buen Retiro. I know an American woman who furnished apartments and rented them before the movement and I know how to get such an apartment for only the rent that was paid before the movement. There are apartments there that face on the park and you can see all of the park from the windows; the iron fence, the gardens, and the gravel walks and the green of the lawns where they touch the gravel, and the trees deep with shadows and the many fountains, and now the chestnut trees will be in bloom. In Madrid we can walk in the park and rowan the lake if the water is back in it now."

"Why would the water be out?"

"They drained it in November because it made a mark to sight from when the planes came over for bombing. But I think that the water is back in it now. I am not sure. But even if there is no water in it we can walk through all the park away from the lake and there is a part that is like a forest with trees from all parts of the world with their names on them, with placards that tell what trees they are and where they came from."

"I would almost as soon go the cinema," Maria said. "But the trees sound very interesting and I will learn them all with thee if I can remember them."

"They are not as in a museum," Robert Jordan said. "They grow naturally and there are hills in the park and part of the park is like a jungle. Then below it there is the book fair where along the sidewalks there are hundreds of booths with second-hand books in them and now, since the movement, there are many books, stolen in the looting of the houses which have been bombed and from the houses of the fascists, and brought to the book fair by those who stole them. I could spend all day every day at the stalls of the book fair as lance did in the days before the movement, if I ever could have any time in Madrid."

"While thou art visiting the book fair I will occupy myself with the apartment," Maria said. "Will we have enough money for a

servant? “

“Surely. I can get Petra who is at the hotel if she pleases thee. She cooks well and is clean. I have eaten there with newspapermen that she cooks for. They have electric stoves in their rooms.”

“If you wish her,” Maria said. “Or I can find some one. But wilt thou not be away much with thy work? They would not let me go with thee on such work as this.”

“Perhaps I can get work in Madrid. I have done this work now for a long time and I have fought since the start of the movement. It is possible that they would give me work now in Madrid. I have never asked for it. I have always been at the front or in such work as this.

“Do you know that until I met thee I have never asked for anything? Nor wanted anything? Nor thought of anything except the movement and the winning of this war? Truly I have been very pure in my ambitions. I have worked much and now I love thee and,” he said it now in a complete embracing of all that would not be, “I love thee as I love all that we have fought for. I love thee as I love liberty and dignity and the rights of all men to work and not be hungry. I love thee as I love Madrid that we have defended and as I love all my comrades that have died. And many have died. Many. Many. Thou canst not think how many. But I love thee as I love what I love most in the world and I love thee more. I love thee very much, rabbit. More than I can tell thee. But I say this now to tell thee a little. I have never had a wife and now I have thee for a wife and I am happy.”

“I will make thee as good a wife as I can,” Maria said. “Clearly I am not well trained but I will try to make up for that. If we live in Madrid; good. If we must live in any other place; good. If we live nowhere and I can go with thee; better. If we go to thy country I will learn to talk *Inglés* like the most *Inglés* that there is. I will study all their manners and as they do so will I do.”

“Thou wilt be very comic.”

“Surely. I will make mistakes but you will tell me and I will never make them twice, or maybe only twice. Then in thy country if thou art lonesome for our food I can cook for thee. And I will go to a school to learn to be a wife, if there is such a school, and study at it.”

“There are such schools but thou dost not need that schooling.”

“Pilar told me that she thought they existed in your country. She had read of them in a periodical. And she told me also that I must learn to speak *Inglés* and to speak it well so thou wouldst never be ashamed of me.”

“When did she tell you this?”

“Today while we were packing. Constantly she talked to me about what I should do to be thy wife.”

I guess she was going to Madrid too, Robert Jordan thought, and said, “What else did she say?”

“She said I must take care of my body and guard the line of my figure as though I were a bullfighter. She said this was of great importance.”

“It is,” Robert Jordan said. “But thou hast not to worry about that for many years.”

“No. She said those of our race must watch that always as it can come suddenly. She told me she was once as slender as I but that in those days women did not take exercise. She told me what exercises I should take and that I must not eat too much. She told me which things not to eat. But I have forgotten and must ask her again.”

“Potatoes,” he said.

“Yes,” she went on. “It was potatoes and things that are fried. Also when I told her about this of the soreness she said I must not tell thee but must support the pain and not let thee know. But I told thee because I do not wish to lie to thee ever and also I feared that thou might think we did not have the joy in common any longer and that other, as it was in the high country, had not truly happened.”

“It was right to tell me.”

“Truly? For I am ashamed and I will do anything for thee that thou should wish. Pilar has told me of things one can do for a husband.”

“There is no need to do anything. What we have we have together and we will keep it and guard it. I love thee thus lying beside thee and touching thee and knowing thou art truly there and when thou art ready again we will have all.”

“But hast thou not necessities that I can care for? She explained that to me.”

“Nay. We will have our necessities together. I have no necessities apart from thee.”

“That seems much better to me. But understand always that I will do what you wish. But thou must tell me for I have great ignorance and much of what she told me I did not understand clearly. For I was ashamed to ask and she is of such great and varied wisdom.”

“Rabbit,” he said. “Thou art very wonderful.”

“Qué va,” she said. “But to try to learn all of that which goes into wifehood in a day while we are breaking camp and packing for a battle with another battle passing in the country above is a rare thing and if I make serious mistakes thou must tell me for I love thee. It could be possible for me to remember things incorrectly and much that she told me was very complicated.”

“What else did she tell thee?”

“Pues so many things I cannot remember them. She said I could tell thee of what was done to me if I ever began to think of it again because thou art a good man and already have understood it all. But that it were better never to speak of it unless it came on me as a black thing as it had been before and then that telling it to thee might rid me of it.”

“Does it weigh on thee now?”

“No. It is as though it had never happened since we were first

together. There is the sorrow for my parents always. But that there will be always. But I would have thee know that which you should know for thy own pride if I am to be thy wife. Never did I submit to anyone. Always I fought and always it took two of them or more to do me the harm. One would sit on my head and hold me. I tell thee this for thy pride."

"My pride is in thee. Do not tell it."

"Nay, I speak of thy own pride which it is necessary to have in thy wife. And another thing. My father was the mayor of the village and an honorable man. My mother was an honorable woman and a good Catholic and they shot her with my father because of the politics of my father who was a Republican. I saw both of them shot and my father said, *'Viva la Republica,'* when they shot him standing against the wall of the slaughterhouse of our village.

"My mother standing against the same wall said, 'Viva my husband who was the Mayor of this village,' and I hoped they would shoot me too and I was going to say *'Viva la Republica y vivan mis padres,'* but instead there was no shooting but instead the doing of the things.

"Listen. I will tell thee of one thing since it affects us. After the shooting at the *matadero* they took us, those relatives who had seen it but were not shot, back from the *matadero* up the steep hill into the main square of the town. Nearly all were weeping but some were numb with what they had seen and the tears had dried in them. I myself could not cry. I did not notice anything that passed for I could only see my father and my mother at the moment of the shooting and my mother saying, 'Long live my husband who was Mayor of this village,' and this was in my head like a scream that would not die but kept on and on. For my mother was not a Republican and she would not say, *'Viva la Republica,'* but only *Viva* my father who lay there, on his face, by her feet.

"But what she had said, she had said very loud, like a shriek and then they shot and she fell and I tried to leave the line to go to her

but we were all tied. The shooting was done by the *guardia civil* and they were still there waiting to shoot more when the Falangists herded us away and up the hill leaving the *guardias civiles* leaning on their rifles and leaving all the bodies there against the wall. We were tied by the wrists in a long line of girls and women and they herded us up by the hill and through the streets to the square and in the square they stopped in front of the barbershop which was across the square from the city hall.

"Then the two men looked at us and one said, 'That is the daughter of the Mayor,' and the other said, 'Commence with her.'

"Then they cut the rope that was on each of my wrists, one saying to others of them, 'Tie up the line,' and these two took me by the arms and into the barbershop and lifted me up and put me in the barber's chair and held me there.

"I saw my face in the mirror of the barbershop and the faces of those who were holding me and the faces of three others who were leaning over me and I knew none of their faces but in the glass I saw myself and them, but they saw only me. And it was as though one were in the dentist's chair and there were many dentists and they were all insane. My own face I could hardly recognize because my grief had changed it but I looked at it and knew that it was me. But my grief was so great that I had no fear nor any feeling but my grief.

"At that time I wore my hair in two braids and as I watched in the mirror one of them lifted one of the braids and pulled on it so it hurt me suddenly through my grief and then cut it off close to my head with a razor. And I saw myself with one braid and a slash where the other had been. Then he cut off the other braid but without pulling on it and the razor made a small cut on my ear and 1 saw blood come from it. Canst thou feel the scar with thy finger?"

"Yes. But would it be better not to talk of this?"

"This is nothing. 1 will not talk of that which is bad. So he had cut both braids close to my head with a razor and the others

laughed and I did not even feel the cut on my ear and then he stood in front of me and struck me across the face with the braids while the other two held me and he said, 'This is how we make Red nuns. This will show thee how to unite with thy proletarian brothers. Bride of the Red Christ!'

"And he struck me again and again across the face with the braids which had been mine and then he put the two of them in my mouth and tied them tight around my neck, knotting them in the back to make a gag and the two holding me laughed.

"And all of them who saw it laughed and when 1 saw them laugh in the mirror I commenced to cry because until then 1 had been too frozen in myself from the shooting to be able to cry.

"Then the one who had gagged me ran a clippers all over my head; first from the forehead all the way to the back of the neck and then across the top and then all over my head and close behind my ears and they held me so I could see into the glass of the barber's mirror all the time that they did this and 1could not believe it as I saw it done and I cried and I cried but I could not look away from the horror that my face made with the mouth open and the braids tied in it and my head coming naked under the clippers.

"And when the one with the clippers was finsihed he took a bottle of iodine from the shelf of the barber (they had shot the barber too for he belonged to a syndicate, and he lay in the doorway of the shop and they had lifted me over him as they brought me in) and with the glass wand that is in the iodine bottle he touched me on the ear where it had been cut and the small pain of that came through my grief and through my horror.

"Then he stood in front of me and wrote U. H. P. on my forehead with the iodine, lettering it slowly and carefully as though he were an artist and 1sawall of this as it happened in the mirror and 1no longer cried for my heart was frozen in me for my father and my mother and what happened to me now was nothing and I knew it.

“Then when he had finished the lettering, the Falangist stepped back and looked at me to examine his work and then he put down the iodine bottle and picked up the clippers and said, ‘Next,’ and they took me out of the barbershop holding me tight by each arm and 1 stumbled over the barber lying there still in the doorway on his back with his gray face up, and we nearly collided with Concepcion Grada, my best friend, that two of them were bringing in and when she saw me she did not recognize me, and then she recognized me, and she screamed, and I could hear her screaming all the time they were shoving me across the square, and into the doorway, and up the stairs of the city hall and into the office of my father where they laid me onto the couch. And it was there that the bad things were done.”

“My rabbit,” Robert Jordan said and held her as close and as gently as he could. But he was as full of hate as any man could be. “Do not talk more about it. Do not tell me any more for 1 cannot bear my hatred now.”

She was stiff and cold in his arms and she said, “Nay. 1 will never talk more of it. But they are bad people and 1 would like to kill some of them with thee in could. But I have told thee this only for thy pride if! am to be thy wife. So thou wouldst understand.”

“I am glad you told me,” he said. “For tomorrow, with luck, we will kill plenty.”

“But will we kill Falangists? It was they who did it.”

“They do not fight,” he said gloomily. “They kill at the rear. It is not them we fight in battle.”

“But can we not kill them in some way? I would like to kill some very much.”

“I have killed them,” he said. “And we will kill them again. At the trains we have killed them.”

“I would like to go for a train with thee,” Maria said. “The time of the train that Pilar brought me back from I was somewhat crazy. Did she tell thee how I was?”

“Yes. Do not talk of it.”

“I was dead in my head with a numbness and all I could do was cry. But there is another thing that I must tell thee. This I must. Then perhaps thou wilt not marry me. But, Roberto, if thou should not wish to marry me, can we not, then, just be always together?”

“I will marry thee.”

“Nay. I had forgotten this. Perhaps you should not. It is possible that I can never bear thee either a son or a daughter for the Pilar says that if I could it would have happened to me with the things which were done. I must tell thee that. Oh, I do not know why I had forgotten that.”

“It is of no importance, rabbit,” he said. “First it may not be true. That is for a doctor to say. Then I would not wish to bring either a son or a daughter into this world as this world is. And also you take all the love I have to give.”

“I would like to bear thy son and thy daughter,” she told him. “And how can the world be made better if there are no children of us who fight against the fascists?”

“Thou,” he said. “I love thee. Hearest thou? And now we must sleep, rabbit. For I must be up long before daylight and the dawn comes early in this month.”

“Then it is all right about the last thing I said? We can still be married?”

“We are married, now. I marry thee now. Thou art my wife. But go to sleep, my rabbit, for there is little time now.”

“And we will truly be married? Not just a talking?”

“Truly.”

“Then I will sleep and think of that if I wake.”

“I, too.”

“Good night, my husband.”

“Good night,” he said. “Good night, wife.”

He heard her breathing steadily and regularly now and he knew she was asleep and he lay awake and very still not wanting to

waken her by moving. He thought of all the part she had not told him and he lay there hating and he was pleased there would be killing in the morning. But I must not take any of it personally, he thought.

Though how can I keep from it? I know that we did dreadful things to them too. But it was because we were uneducated and knew no better. But they did that on purpose and deliberately. Those who did that are the last flowering of what their education has produced. Those are the flowers of Spanish chivalry. What a people they have been. What sons of bitches from Cortez, Pizarro, Menéndez de Avila all down through Enrique Lister to Pablo. And what wonderful people. There is no finer and no worse people in the world. No kinder people and no crueler. And who understands them? Not me, because if I did I would forgive it all. To understand is to forgive. Thatɔs not true. Forgiveness has been exaggerated. Forgiveness is a Christian idea and Spain has never been a Christian country. It has always had its own special idol worship within the Church. *Otra Virgen más.* I suppose that was why they had to destroy the virgins of their enemies. Surely it was deeper with them, with the Spanish religion fanatics, than it was with the people. The people had grown away from the Church because the Church was in the government and the government had always been rotten. This was the only country that the reformation never reached. They were paying for the Inquisition now, all right.

Well, it was something to think about. Something to keep your mind from worrying about your work. It was sounder than pretending. God, he had done a lot of pretending tonight. And Pilar had been pretending all day. Sure. What if they were killed tomorrow? What did it matter as long as they did the bridge properly? That was all they had to do tomorrow.

It didn't. You couldn't do these things indefinitely. But you weren't supposed to live forever. Maybe I have had all my life in three days, he thought. If that's true I wish we would have spent the

last night differently. But last nights are never any good. Last nothings are any good. Yes, last words were good sometimes. *"Viva* my husband who was Mayor of this town" was good.

He knew it was good because it made a tingle run all over him when he said it to himself. He leaned over and kissed Maria who did not wake. In English he whispered very quietly, "I'd like to marry you, rabbit. I'm very proud of your family."

Chapter Thirty-Two

On that same night in Madrid there were many people at the Hotel Gaylord. A car pulled up under the porte-cochere of the hotel, its headlights painted over with blue calcimine and a little man in black riding boots, gray riding breeches and a short, gray high-buttoned jacket stepped out and returned the salute of the two sentries as he opened the door, nodded to the secret policeman who sat at the concierge's desk and stepped into the elevator. There were two sentries seated on chairs inside the door, one on each side of the marble entrance hall, and these only looked up as the little man passed them at the door of the elevator. It was their business to feel everyone they did not know along the flanks, under the armpits, and over the hip pockets to see if the person entering carried a pistol and, if he did, have him check it with the concierge. But they knew the short man in riding boots very well and they hardly looked up as he passed.

The apartment where he lived in Gaylord's was crowded as he entered. People were sitting and standing about and talking together as in any drawing room and the men and the women were drinking vodka, whiskey and soda, and beer from small glasses filled from great pitchers. Four of the men were in uniform. The others wore windbreakers or leather jackets and three of the four women were dressed in ordinary street dresses while the fourth, who was haggardly thin and dark, wore a sort of severely cut militiawoman's uniform with a skirt with high boots under it.

When he came intc the room, Karkov went at once to the woman in the uniform and bowed to her and shook hands. She was

his wife and he said something to her in Russian that no one could hear and for a moment the insolence that had been in his eyes as he entered the room was gone. Then it lighted again as he saw the mahogany-colored head and the love-lazy face of the well-constructed girl who was his mistress and he strode with short, precise steps over to her and bowed and shook her hand in such a way that no one could tell it was not a mimicry of his greeting to his wife. His wife had not looked after him as he walked across the room. She was standing with a tall, good-looking Spanish officer and they were talking Russian now.

"Your great love is getting a little fat," Karkov was saying to the girl. "All of our heroes are fattening now as we approach the second year." He did not look at the man he was speaking of.

"You are so ugly you would be jealous of a toad," the girl told him cheerfully. She spoke in German. "Can I go with thee to the offensive tomorrow?"

"No. Nor is there one."

"Everyone knows about it," the girl said. "Don't be so mysterious. Dolores is going. I will go with her or Carmen. Many people are going."

"Go with whoever will take you," Karkov said. "I will not." Then he turned to the girl and asked seriously, "Who told thee of it? Be exact."

"Richard," she said as seriously.

Karkov shrugged his shoulders and left her standing.

"Karkov," a man of middle height with a gray, heavy, sagging face, puffed eye pouches and a pendulous under-lip called to him in a dyspeptic voice. "Have you heard the good news?"

Karkov went over to him and the man said, "I only have it now. Not ten minutes ago. It is wonderful. All day the fascists have been fighting among themselves near Segovia. They have been forced to quell the mutinies with automatic rifle and machine gun fire. In the afternoon they were bombing their own troops with planes."

“Yes?” asked Karkov.

“That is true,” the puffy-eyed man said. “Dolores brought the news herself. She was here with the news and was in such a state of radiant exultation as I have never seen. The truth of the news shone from her face. That great face-” he said happily.

“That great face,” Karkov said with no tone in his voice at all.

“If you could have heard her,” the puffy-eyed man said. “The news itself shone from her with a light that was not of this world. In her voice you could tell the truth of what she said. I am putting it in an article for *Izvestia.* It was one of the greatest moments of the war to me when I heard the report in that great voice where pity, compassion and truth are blended. Goodness and truth shine from her as from a true saint of the people. Not for nothing is she called La Pasionaria.”

“Not for nothing,” Karkov said in a dull voice. “You better write it for *Izvestia* now, before you forget that last beautiful lead.”

“That is a woman that is not to joke about. Not even by a cynic like you,” the puffy-eyed man said. “If you could have been here to hear her and to see her face.”

“That great voice,” Karkov said. “That great face. Write it,” he said. “Don’t tell it to me. Don’t waste whole paragraphs on me. Go and write it now.”

“Not just now.”

“I think you’d better,” Karkov said and looked at him, and then looked away. The puffy-eyed man stood there a couple of minutes more holding his glass of vodka, his eyes, puffy as they were, absorbed in the beauty of what he had seen and heard and then he left the room to write it.

Karkov went over to another man of about forty-eight, who was short, chunky, jovial-looking with pale blue eyes, thinning blond hair and a gay mouth under a bristly yellow moustache. This man was in uniform. He was a divisional commander and he was a Hungarian.

“Were you here when the Dolores was here?” Karkov asked the man.

“Yes.”

“What was the stuff?”

“Something about the fascists fighting among themselves. Beautiful if true.”

“You hear much talk of tomorrow.”

“Scandalous. All the journalists should be shot as well as most of the people in this room and certainly the intriguing German unmentionable of a Richard. Whoever gave that Sunday *Juggler* command of a brigade should be shot. Perhaps you and me should be shot too. It is possible,” the General laughed. “Don’t suggest it though.”

“That is a thing I never like to talk about,” Karkov said. “That American who comes here sometimes is over there. You know the one, Jordan, who is with the *partizan* group. He is there where this business they spoke of is supposed to happen.”

“Well, he should have a report through on it tonight then,” the General said. “They don’t like me down there or I’d go down and find out for you. He works with Golz on this, doesn’t he? You’ll see Golz tomorrow.”

“Early tomorrow.”

“Keep out of his way until it’s going well,” the General said. “He hates you bastards as much as I do. Though he has a much better temper.”

“But about this—”

“It was probably the fascists having manceuvres,” the General grinned. “Well, we’ll see if Golz can manceuvre them a little. Let Golz try his hand at it. We manceuvred them at Guadalajara.”

“I hear you are travelling too,” Karkov said, showing his bad teeth as he smiled. The General was suddenly angry.

“And me too. Now is the mouth on me. And on all of us always. This filthy sewing circle of gossip. One man who could keep his

mouth shut could save the country if he believed he could."

"Your friend Prieto can keep his mouth shut."

"But he doesn't believe he can win. How can you win without belief in the people?"

"You decide that," Karkov said. "I am going to get a little sleep."

He left the smoky, gossip-filled room and went into the back bedroom and sat down on the bed and pulled his boots off. He could still hear them talking so he shut the door and opened the window. He did not bother to undress because at two o'clock he would be starting for the drive by Colmenar, Cerceda, and Navacerrada up to the front where Golz would be attacking in the mornmg.

Chapter Thirty-Three

It was two o'clock in the morning when Pilar waked him. As her hand touched him he thought, at first, it was Maria and he rolled toward her and said, "Rabbit." Then the woman's big hand shook his shoulder and he was suddenly, completely and absolutely awake and his hand was around the butt of the pistol that lay alongside of his bare right leg and all of him was as cocked as the pistol with its safety catch slipped off.

In the dark he saw it was Pilar and he looked at the dial of his wrist watch with the two hands shining in the short angle close to the top and seeing it was only two, he said, "What passes with thee, woman?"

"Pablo is gone," the big woman said to him. Robert Jordan put on his trousers and shoes. Maria had not waked.

"When?" he asked.

"It must be an hour."

"And?"

"He has taken something of thine," the woman said miserably.

"So. What?"

"I do not know," she told him. "Come and see."

In the dark they walked over to the entrance of the cave, ducked under the blanket and went in. Robert Jordan followed her in the dead-ashes, bad-air and sleeping-men smell of the cave, shining his electric torch so that he would not step on any of those who were sleeping on the floor. Anselmo woke and said, "Is it time?"

"No," Robert Jordan whispered. "Sleep, old one."

The two sacks were at the head of Pilar's bed which was

screened off with a hanging blanket from the rest of the cave. The bed smelt stale and sweat-dried and sickly-sweet the wayan Indian's bed does as Robert Jordan knelt on it and shone the torch on the two sacks. There was a long slit from top to bottom in each one. Holding the torch in his left hand, Robert Jordan felt in the first sack with his right hand. This was the one that he carried his robe in and it should not be very full. It was not very full. There was some wire in it still but the square wooden box of the exploder was gone. So was the cigar box with the carefully wrapped and packed detonators. So was the screw-top tin with the fuse and the caps.

Robert Jordan felt in the other sack. It was still full of explosive. There might be one packet missing.

He stood up and turned to the woman. There is a hollow empty feeling that a man can have when he is waked too early in the morning that is almost like the feeling of disaster and he had this multiplied a thousand times.

"And this is what you call guarding one's materials," he said.

"I slept with my head against them and one arm touching them," Pilar told him.

"You slept well."

"Listen," the woman said. "He got up in the night and I said, 'Where do you go, Pablo?' 'To urinate, woman,' he told me and I slept again. When I woke again I did not know what time had passed but I thought, when he was not there, that he had gone down to look at the horses as was his custom. Then," she finished miserably, "when he did not come I worried and when I worried I felt of the sacks to be sure all was well and there were the slit places and I came to thee."

"Come on," Robert Jordan said.

They were outside now and it was still so near the middle of the night that you could not feel the morning coming.

"Can he get out with the horses other ways than by the sentry?"

"Two ways."

“Who’s at the top?”

“Eladio.”

Robert Jordan said nothing more until they reached the meadow where the horses were staked out to feed. There were three horses feeding in the meadow. The big bay and the gray were gone.

“How long ago do you think it was he left you?”

“It must have been an hour.”

“Then that is that,” Robert Jordan said. “I go to get what is left of my sacks and go back to bed.”

“I will guard them.”

“Qui ua, you will guard them. You’ve guarded them once already.”

“Inglés, “ the woman said, “I feel in regard to this as you do. There is nothing I would not do to bring back thy property. You have no need to hurt me. We have both been betrayed by Pablo.”

As she said this Robert Jordan realized that he could not afford the luxury of being bitter, that he could not quarrel with this woman. He had to work with this woman on that day that was already two hours and more gone.

He put his hand on her shoulder. “It is nothing, Pilar,” he told her. “What is gone is of small importance. We shall improvise something that will do as well.”

“But what did he take?”

“Nothing, woman. Some luxuries that one permits oneself.”

“Was it part of thy mechanism for the exploding?”

“Yes. But there are other ways to do the exploding. Tell me, did Pablo not have caps and fuse? Surely they would have equipped him with those?”

“He has taken them,” she said miserably. “I looked at once for them. They are gone, too.”

They walked back through the woods to the entrance of the cave.

“Get some sleep,” he said. “We are better off with Pablo gone.”

“I go to see Eladio.”

“He will have gone another way.”

“I go anyway. I have betrayed thee with my lack of smartness.”

“Nay,” he said. “Get some sleep, woman. We must be under way at four.”

He went into the cave with her and brought out the two sacks, carrying them held together in both arms so that nothing could spill from the slits.

“Let me sew them up.”

“Before we start,” he said softly. “I take them not against you but so that I can sleep.”

“I must have them early to sew them.”

“You shall have them early,” he told her. “Get some sleep, woman.”

“Nay,” she said. “I have failed thee and I have failed the Republic.”

“Get thee some sleep, woman,” he told her gently. “Get thee some sleep.”

Chapter Thirty-Four

The fascists held the crests of the hills here. Then there was a valley that no one held except for a fascist post in a farmhouse with its outbuildings and its barn that they had fortified. Andrés, on his way to Golz with the message from Robert Jordan, made a wide circle around this post in the dark. He knew where there was a trip wire laid that fired a set-gun and he located it in the dark, stepped over it, and started along the small stream bordered with poplars whose leaves were moving with the night wind. A cock crowed at the farmhouse that was the fascist post and as he walked along the stream he looked back and saw, through the trunks of the poplars, a light showing at the lower edge of one of the windows of the farmhouse. The night was quiet and clear and Andrés left the stream and struck across the meadow.

There were four haycocks in the meadow that had stood there ever since the fighting in July of the year before. No one had ever carried the hay away and the four seasons that had passed had flattened the cocks and made the hay worthless.

Andrés thought what a waste it was as he stepped over a trip wire that ran between two of the haycocks. But the Republicans would have had to carry the hay up the steep Guadarrama slope that rose beyond the meadow and the fascists did not need it, I suppose, he thought.

They have all the hay they need and all the grain. They have much, he thought. But we will give them a blow tomorrow morning. Tomorrow morning we will give them something for Sordo. What barbarians they are! But in the morning there will be

dust on the road.

He wanted to get this message-taking over and be back for the attack on the posts in the morning. Did he really want to get back though or did he only pretend he wanted to be back? He knew the reprieved feeling he had felt when the *Inglés* had told him he was to go with the message. He had faced the prospect of the morn- ing calmly. It was what was to be done. He had voted for it and would do it. The wiping out of Sordo had impressed him deeply. But, after all, that was Sordo. That was not them. What they had to do they would do.

But when the *Inglés* had spoken to him of the message he had felt the way he used to feel when he was a boy and he had wakened in the morning of the festival of his village and heard it raining hard so that he knew that it would be too wet and that the bull baiting in the square would be cancelled.

He loved the bullbaiting when he was a boy and he looked forward to it and to the moment when he would be in the square in the hot sun and the dust with the carts ranged all around to close the exits and to make a closed place into which the bull would come, sliding down out of his box, braking with all four feet, when they pulled the end-gate up. He looked forward with ex-' citement, delight and sweating fear to the moment when, in the square, he would hear the clatter of the bull's horns knocking against the wood of his travelling box, and then the sight of him as he came, sliding, braking out into the square, his head up, his nostrils wide, his ears twitching, dust in the sheen of his black hide, dried crut splashed on his flanks, watching his eyes set wide apart, unblinking eyes under the widespread horns as smooth and solid as driftwood polished by the sand, the sharp tips uptilted so that to see them did something to your heart.

He looked forward all the year to that moment when the bull would come out into the square on that day when you watched his eyes while he made his choice of whom in the square he would

attack in that sudden head-lowering, horn-reaching, quick cat-gallop that stopped your heart dead when it started. He had looked forward to that moment all the year when he was a boy; but the feeling when the *Inglés* gave the order about the message was the same as when you woke to hear the reprieve of the rain falling on the slate roof, against the stone wall and into the puddles on the dirt street of the village.

He had always been very brave with the bull in those village *capeas,* as brave as any in the village or of the other near-by villages, and not for anything would he have missed it any year although he did not go to the *capeas* of other villages. He was able to wait still when the bull charged and only jumped aside at the last moment. He waved a sack under his muzzle to draw him off when the bull had some one down and many times he had held and pulled on the horns when the bull had some one on the ground and pulled sideways on the horn, had slapped and kicked him in the face until he left the man to charge some one else.

He had held the bull's tail to pull him away from a fallen man, bracing hard and pulling and twisting. Once he had pulled the tail around with one hand until he could reach a horn with the other and when the bull had lifted his head to charge him he had run backwards, circling with the bull, holding the tail in one hand and the horn in the other until the crowd had swarmed onto the bull with their knives and stabbed him. In the dust and the heat, the shouting, the bull and man and wine smell, he had been in the first of the crowd that threw themselves onto the bull and he knew the feeling when the bull rocked and bucked under him and he lay across the withers with one arm locked around the base of the horn and his hand holding the other horn tight, his fingers locked as his body tossed and wrenched and his left arm felt as though it would tear from the socket while he lay on the hot, dusty, bristly, tossing slope of muscle, the ear clenched tight in his teeth, and drove his knife again and again and again into the swelling, tossing bulge of

the neck that was now spouting hot on his fist as he let his weight hang on the high slope of the withers and banged and banged into the neck.

The first time he had bit the ear like that and held onto it, his neck and jaws stiffened against the tossing, they had all made fun of him afterwards. But though they joked him about it they had great respect for him. And every year after that he had to repeat it. They called him the bulldog of Villaconejos and joked about him eating cattle raw. But everyone in the village looked forward to seeing him do it and every year he knew that first the bull would come out, then there would be the charges and the tossing, and then when they yelled for the rush for the killing he would place himself to rush through the other attackers and leap for his hold. Then, when it was over, and the bull settled and sunk dead finally under the weight of the killers, he would stand up and walk away ashamed of the ear part, but also as proud as a man could be. And he would go through the carts to wash his hands at the stone fountain and men would clap him on the back and hand him wineskins and say, "Hurray for you, Bulldog. Long life to your mother."

Or they would say, "That's what it is to have a pair of *cojones!* Year after year!"

Andrés would be ashamed, empty-feeling, proud and happy, and he would shake them all off and wash his hands and his right arm and wash his knife well and then take one of the wineskins and rinse the ear-taste out of his mouth for that year; spitting the wine on the stone flags of the plaza before he lifted the wineskin high and let the wine spurt into the back of his mouth.

Surely. He was the Bulldog of Villaconejos and not for anything would he have missed doing it each year in his village. But he knew there was no better feeling than that one the sound of the rain gave when he knew he would not have to do it.

But I must go back, he told himself. There is no question but that I must go back for the affair of the posts and the bridge. My

brother Eladio is there, who is of my own bone and flesh. Anselmo, Primitivo, Fernando, Agustín, Rafael, though clearly he is not serious, the two women, Pablo and the *Inglés,* though the *Inglés* does not count since he is a foreigner and under orders. They are all in for it. It is impossible that I should escape this proving through the accident of a message. I must deliver this message now quickly and well and then make all haste to return in time for the assault on the posts. It would be ignoble of me not to participate in this action because of the accident of this message. That could not be clearer. And besides, he told himself, as one who suddenly remembers that there will be pleasure too in an engagement only the onerous aspects of which he has been considering, and besides I will enjoy the killing of some fascists. It has been too long since we have destroyed any. Tomorrow can be a day of much valid action. Tomorrow can be a day of concrete acts. Tomorrow can be a day which is worth something. That tomorrow should come and that I should be there.

Just then, as kneedeep in the gorse he climbed the steep slope that led to the Republican lines, a partridge flew up from under his feet, exploding in a whirr of wingbeats in the dark and he felt a sudden breath-stopping fright. It is the suddenness, he thought. How can they move their wings that fast? She must be nesting now. I probably trod close to the eggs. If there were not this war I would tie a hand- kerchief to the bush and come back in the daytime and search out the nest and I could take the eggs and put them under a setting hen and when they hatched we would have little partridges in the poultry yard and I would watch them grow and, when they were grown, I'd use them for callers. I wouldn't blind them because they would be tame. Or do you suppose they would fly off? Probably. Then I would have to blind them.

But I don't like to do that after I have raised them. I could clip the wings or tether them by one leg when I used them for calling. If there was no war I would go with Eladio to get crayfish from that

stream back there by the fascist post. One time we got four dozen from that stream in a day. If we go to the Sierra de Gredos after this of the bridge there are fine streams there for trout and for crayfish also. I hope we go to Gredos, he thought. We could make a good life in Gredos in the summer time and in the fall but it would be terribly cold in winter. But by winter maybe we will have won the war.

If our father had not been a Republican both Eladio and I would be soldiers now with the fascists and if one were a soldier with them then there would be no problem. One would obey orders and one would live or die and in the end it would be however it would be. It was easier to live under a regime than to fight it.

But this irregular fighting was a thing of much responsibility. There was much worry if you were one to worry. Eladio thinks more than I do. Also he worries. I believe truly in the cause and I do not worry. But it is a life of much responsibility.

I think that we are born into a time of great difficulty, he thought. I think any other time was probably easier. One suffers little because all of us have been formed to resist suffering. They who suffer are unsuited to this climate. But it is a time of difficult decisions. The fascists attacked and made our decision for us. We fight to live. But I would like to have it so that I could tie a handkerchief to that bush back there and come in the daylight and take the eggs and put them under a hen and be able to see the chicks of the partridge in my own courtyard. I would like such small and regular things.

But you have no house and no courtyard in your no-house, he thought. You have no family but a brother who goes to battle tomorrow and you own nothing but the wind and the sun and an empty belly. The wind is small, he thought, and there is no sun. You have four grenades in your pocket but they are only good to throwaway. You have a carbine on your back but it is only good to give away bullets. You have a message to give away. And you're full

of crap that you can give to the earth, he grinned in the dark. You can anoint it also with urine. Everything you have is to give. Thou art a phenomenon of philosophy and an unfortunate man, he told himself and grinned again.

But for all his noble thinking a little while before there was in him that reprieved feeling that had always come with the sound of rain in the village on the morning of the fiesta. Ahead of him now at the top of the ridge was the government position where he knew he would be challenged.

Chapter Thirty-Five

Robert Jordan lay in the robe beside the girl Maria who was still sleeping. He lay on his side turned away from the girl and he felt her long body against his back and the touch of it now was just an irony. You, you, he raged at himself. Yes, you. You told yourself the first time you saw him that when he would be friendly would be when the treachery would come. You damned fool. You utter blasted damned fool. Chuck all that. That's not what you have to do now.

What are the chances that he hid them or threw them away? Not so good. Besides you'd never find them in the dark. He would have kept them. He took some dynamite, too. Oh, the dirty, vile, treacherous sad. The dirty rotten crut. Why couldn't he have just mucked off and not have taken the exploder and the detonators? Why was I such an utter goddamned fool as to leave them with that bloody woman? The smart, treacherous ugly bastard. The dirty *cabrón.*

Cut it out and take it easy, he told himself. You had to take chances and that was the best there was. You're just mucked, he told himself. You're mucked for good and higher than a kite. Keep your damned head and get the anger out and stop this cheap lamenting like a damned wailing wall. It's gone. God damn you, it's gone. Oh damn the dirty swine to hell. You can muck your way out of it. You've got to, you know you've got to blow it if you have to stand there and—cut out that stuff, too. Why don't you ask your grandfather?

Oh, muck my grandfather and muck this whole treacherous

muckfaced mucking country and every mucking Spaniard in it on either side and to hell forever. Muck them to hell together, Largo, Prieto, Asensio, Miaja, Raja, all of them. Muck everyone of them to death to hell. Much the whole treachery-ridden country. Muck their egotism and their selfishness and their selfishness and their egotism and their conceit and their treachery. Muck them to hell and always. Muck them before we die for them. Muck them after we die for them. Muck them to death and hell. God muck Pablo. Pablo is all of them. God pity the Spanish people. Any leader they have will muck them. One good man, Pablo Iglesias, in two thousand years and everybody else mucking them. How do we know how he would have stood up in this war? I remember when I thought Largo was O.K. Durruti was good and his own people shot him there at the Puente de los Franceses. Shot him because he wanted them to attack. Shot him in the glorious discipline of indiscipline. The cowardly swine. Oh muck them all to hell and be damned. And that Pablo that just mucked off with my exploder and my box of detonators. Oh muck him to deepest hell. But no. He's mucked us instead. They always muck you instead, from Cortez and Menendez de Avila down to Miaja. Look at what Miaja did to Kleber. The bald egotistical swine. The stupid egg-headed bastard. Muck all the insane, egotistical, treacherous swine that have always governed Spain and ruled her armies. Muck everybody but the people and then be damned careful what they turn into when they have power.

His rage began to thin as he exaggerated more and more and spread his scorn and contempt so widely and unjustly that he could no longer believe in it himself. If that were true what are you here for? It's not true and you know it. Look at all the good ones. Look at all the fine ones. He could not bear to be unjust. He hated injustice as he hated cruelty and he lay in his rage that blinded his mind until gradually the anger died down and the red, black, blinding, killing anger was all gone and his mind now as quiet, empty-calm and sharp, cold-seeing as a man is after he has had sexual

intercourse with a woman that he does not love.

"And you, you poor rabbit," he leaned over and said to Maria, who smiled in her sleep and moved close against him. "I would have struck thee there awhile back if thou had spoken. What an animal a man is in a rage."

He lay close to the girl now with his arms around her and his chin on her shoulder and lying there he figured out exactly what he would have to do and how he would have to do it.

And it isn't so bad, he thought. It really isn't so bad at all. I don't know whether anyone has ever done it before. But there will always be people who will do it from now on, given a similar jam. If we do it and if they hear about it. If they hear about it, yes. If they do not just wonder how it was we did it. We are too short of people but there is no sense to worry about that. I will do the bridge with what we have. God, I'm glad I got over being angry. It was like not being able to breathe in a storm. That being angry is another damned luxury you can't afford.

"It's all figured out, *guapa,"* he said softly against Maria's shoulder. "You haven't been bothered by any of it. You have not known about it. We'll be killed but we'll blow the bridge. You have not had to worry about it. That isn't much of a wedding present. But is not a good night's sleep supposed to be priceless? You had a good night's sleep. See if you can wear that like a ring on your finger. Sleep, *guapa.* Sleep well, my beloved. I do not wake thee. That is all I can do for thee now."

He lay there holding her very lightly, feeling her breathe and feeling her heart beat, and keeping track of the time on his wrist watch.

Chapter Thirty-Six

Andrés had challenged at the government position. That is, he had lain down where the ground fell sharply away below the triple belt of wire and shouted up at the rock and earth parapet. There was no continual defensive line and he could easily have passed this position in the dark and made his way farther into the government territory before running into some one who would challenge him. But it seemed safer and simpler to get it over here.

"Salud!" he had shouted. *"Salud, milicianos!"*

He heard a bolt snick as it was pulled back. Then, from farther down the parapet, a rifle fired. There was a crashing crack and a downward stab of yellow in the dark. Andrés had flattened at the click, the top of his head hard against the ground.

"Don't shoot, Comrades," Andrés shouted. "Don't shoot! I want to come in."

"How many are you?" some one called from behind the parapet.

"One. Me. Alone."

"Who are you?"

"Andrés Lopez of Villaconejos. From the band of Pablo. With a message."

"Have you your rifle and equipment?"

"Yes, man."

"We can take in none without rifle and equipment," the voice said. "Nor in larger groups than three."

"I am alone," Andrés shouted. "It is important. Let me come in."

He could hear them talking behind the parapet but not what they were saying. Then the voice shouted again, "How many are

you?"

"One. Me. Alone. For the love of God."

They were talking behind the parapet again. Then the vOICe came, "Listen, fascist."

"I am not a fascist," Andrés shouted. "I am a *guerrillero* from the band of Pablo. I come with a message for the General Staff."

"He's crazy," he heard some one say. "Toss a bomb at him."

"Listen," Andrés said. "I am alone. I am completely by myself. I obscenity in the midst of the holy mysteries that I am alone. Let me come in."

"He speaks like a Christian," he heard some one say and laugh.

Then some one else said, "The best thing is to toss a bomb down on him."

"No," Andrés shouted. "That would be a great mistake. This is important. Let me come in."

It was for this reason that he had never enjoyed trips back and forth between the lines. Sometimes it was better than others. But it was never good.

"You are alone?" the voice called down again.

"Me cago en la leche," Andrés shouted. "How many times must I tell thee? I AM ALONE."

"Then if you should be alone stand up and hold thy rifle over thy head."

Andrés stood up and put the carbine above his head, holding it in both hands.

"Now come through the wire. We have thee covered with the *máquina ,"* the voice called.

Andrés was in the first zigzag belt of wire. "I need my hands to get through the wire," he shouted.

"Keep them up," the voice commanded.

"I am held fast by the wire," Andrés called.

"It would have been simpler to have thrown a bomb at him," a voice said.

“Let him sling his rifle,” another voice said. “He cannot come through there with his hands above his head. Use a little reason.”

“All these fascists are the same,” the other voice said. “They demand one condition after another.”

“Listen,” Andrés shouted. “I am no fascist but a *guerrillero* from the band of Pablo. We’ve killed more fascists than the typhus.”

“I have never heard of the band of Pablo,” the man who was evidently in command of the post said. “Neither of Peter nor of Paul nor of any of the other saints nor apostles. Nor of their bands. Sling thy rifle over thy shoulder and use thy hands to come through the wire.”

“Before we loose the *máquina* on thee,” another shouted.

“Qué poco amables soisl” Andrés said. “You’re not very amiable.”

He was working his way through the wire.

“Amables,” some one shouted at him. “We are in a war, man.”

“It begins to appear so,” Andrés said.

“What’s he say?”

Andrés heard a bolt click again.

“Nothing,” he shouted. “I say nothing. Do not shoot until I get through this fornicating wire.”

“Don’t speak badly of our wire,” some one shouted. “Or we’ll toss a bomb on you.”

“Quiero decir, qué buena alambrada,” Andrés shouted. “What beautiful wire. God in a latrine. What lovely wire. Soon I will be with thee, brothers.”

“Throw a bomb at him,” he heard the one voice say. “I tell you that’s the soundest way to deal with the whole thing.”

“Brothers,” Andrés said. He was wet through with sweat and he knew the bomb advocate was perfectly capable of tossing a grenade at any moment. “I have no importance.”

“I believe it,” the bomb man said.

“You are right,” Andrés said. He was working carefully through the third belt of wire and he was very close to the parapet. “I have

no importance of any kind. But the affair is serious. *Muy, muy serio.* *“*

“There is no more serious thing than liberty,” the bomb man shouted. “Thou thinkest there is anything more serious than liberty?” he asked challengingly.

“No, man,” Andrés said, relieved. He knew now he was up against the crazies; the ones with the black-and-red scarves. *“Viva la Libertad!”*

“Viva la F. A. I. Viva la C. *N. T,”* they shouted back at him from the parapet. *“Viva el anarco-sindicalismo* and liberty.”

“Viva nosotros,” Andrés shouted. “Long life to us.”

“He is a coreligionary of ours,” the bomb man said. “And I might have killed him with this.”

He looked at the grenade in his hand and was deeply moved as Andrés climbed over the parapet. Putting his arms around him, the grenade still in one hand, so that it rested against Andrés’s shoulder blade as he embraced him, the bomb man kissed him on both cheeks.

“I am content that nothing happened to thee, brother,” he said.

“I am very content.”

“Where is thy officer?” Andrés asked.

“I command here,” a man said. “Let me see thy papers.”

He took them into a dugout and looked at them with the light of a candle. There was the little square of folded silk with the colors of the Republic and the seal of the S. 1. M. in the center. There was the *Salvoconducto* or safe-conduct pass giving his name, age, height, birthplace and mission that Robert Jordan had written out on a sheet from his notebook and sealed with the S. 1. M. rubber stamp and there were the four folded sheets of the dispatch to Golz which were tied around with a cord and sealed with wax and the impression of the metal S. 1. M. seal that was set in the top end of the wooden handle of the rubber stamp.

“This I have seen,” the man in command of the post said and

handed back the piece of silk. “This you all have, I know. But its possession proves nothing without this.” He lifted the *Saluoconducto* and read it through again. “Where were you born?”

“Villaconejos,’ Andrés said.

“And what do they raise there?”

“Melons,” Andrés said. “As all the world knows.”

“Who do you know there?”

“Why? Are you from there?”

“Nay. But I have been there. I am from Aranjuez.’

“Ask me about anyone.”

“Describe José Rincon.”

“Who keeps the bodega?”

“Naturally.”

“With a shaved head and a big belly and a cast in one eye.”

“Then this is valid,” the man said and handed him back the paper. “But what do you do on their side?”

“Our father had installed himself at Villacastfn before the movement,” Andrés said. “Down there beyond the mountains on the plain. It was there we were surprised by the movement. Since the movement I have fought with the band of Pablo. But I am in a great hurry, man, to take that dispatch.”

“How goes it in the country of the fascists?” the man commanding asked. He was in no hurry.

“Today we had much *tomate,”* Andrés said proudly. “Today there was plenty of dust on the road all day. Today they wiped out the band of Sordo.”

“And who is Sordo?” the other asked deprecatingly.

“The leader of one of the best bands in the mountains.”

“All of you should come in to the Republic and join the army,” the officer said. “There is too much of this silly guerilla nonsense going on. All of you should come in and submit to our Libertarian discipline. Then when we wished to send out guerillas we would send them out as they are needed.”

Andrés was a man endowed with almost supreme patience. He had taken the coming in through the wire calmly. None of this examination had flustered him. He found it perfectly normal that this man should have no understanding of them nor of what they were doing and that he should talk idiocy was to be expected. That it should all go slowly should be expected too; but now he wished to go.

"Listen, *Compadre,"* he said. "It is very possible that you are right. But I have orders to deliver that dispatch to the General commanding the thirty-fifth Division, which makes an attack at daylight in these hills and it is already late at night and I must go."

"What attack? What do you know of an attack?"

"Nay. I know nothing. But I must go now to Navacerrada and go on from there. Wilt thou send me to thy commander who will give me transport to go on from there? Send one with me now to respond to him that there be no delay."

"I distrust all of this greatly," he said. "It might have been better to have shot thee as thou approached the wire."

"You have seen my papers, Comrade, and I have explained my mission," Andrés told him patiently.

"Papers can be forged," the officer said. "Any fascist could invent such a mission. I will go with thee myself to the Commander."

"Good," Andrés said. "That you should come. But that we should go quickly."

"Thou, Sanchez. Thou commandest in my place," the officer said. "Thou knowest thy duties as well as I do. I take this socalled Comrade to the Commander."

They started down the shallow trench behind the crest of the hill and in the dark Andrés smelt the foulness the defenders of the hill crest had made all through the bracken on that slope. He did not like these people who were like dangerous children; dirty, foul, undisciplined, kind, loving, silly and ignorant but always dangerous

because they were armed. He, Andrés, was without politics except that he was for the Republic. He had heard these people talk many times and he thought what they said was often beautiful and fine to hear but he did not like them. It is not liberty not to bury the mess one makes, he thought. No animal has more liberty than the cat; but it buries the mess it makes. The cat is the best anarchist. Until they learn that from the cat I cannot respect them.

Ahead of him the officer stopped suddenly.

"You have your *carabine* still," he said.

"Yes," Andrés said. "Why not?"

"Give it to me," the officer said. "You could shoot me in the back with it."

"Why?" Andrés asked him. "Why would I shoot thee in the back?"

"One never knows," the officer said. "I trust no one. Give me the carbine."

Andrés unslung it and handed it to him.

"If it pleases thee to carry it," he said.

"It is better," the officer said. "We are safer that way."

They went on down the hill in the dark.

Chapter Thirty-Seven

Now Robert Jordan lay with the girl and he watched time passing on his wrist. It went slowly, almost imperceptibly, for it was a small watch and he could not see the second hand. But as he watched the minute hand he found he could almost check its motion with his concentration. The girl's head was under his chin and when he moved his head to look at the watch he felt the cropped head against his cheek, and it was as soft but as alive and silkily rolling as when a marten's fur rises under the caress of your hand when you spread the trap jaws open and lift the marten clear and, holding it, stroke the fur smooth. His throat swelled when his cheek moved against Maria's hair and there was a hollow aching from his throat all through him as he held his arms around her; his head dropped, his eyes close to the watch where the lance-pointed, luminous splinter moved slowly up the left face of the dial. He could see its movement clearly and steadily now and he held Maria close now to slow it. He did not want to wake her but he could not leave her alone now in this last time and he put his lips behind her ear and moved them up along her neck, feeling the smooth skin and the soft touch of her hair on them. He could see the hand moving on the watch and he held her tighter and ran the tip of his tongue along her cheek and onto the lobe of her ear and along the lovely convolutions to the sweet, firm rim at the top, and his tongue was trembling. He felt the trembling run through all of the hollow aching and he saw the hand of the watch now mounting in sharp angle toward the top where the hour was. Now while she still slept he turned her head and put his lips to hers. They lay there, just

touching lightly against the sleep-firm mouth and he swung them softly across it, feeling them brush lightly. He turned himself toward her and he felt her shiver along the long, light lovely body and then she sighed, sleeping, and then she, still sleeping, held him too and then, un sleeping, her lips were against his firm and hard and pressing and he said, “But the pain.”

And she said, “Nay, there is no pain.”

“Rabbit.”

“Nay, speak not.”

“My rabbit.”

“Speak not. Speak not.”

Then they were together so that as the hand on the watch moved, unseen now, they knew that nothing could ever happen to the one that did not happen to the other, that no other thing could happen more than this; that this was all and always; this was what had been and now and whatever was to come. This, that they were not to have, they were having. They were having now and before and always and now and now and now. Oh, now, now, now, the only now, and above all now, and there is no other now but thou now and now is thy prophet. Now and forever now. Come now, now, for there is no now but now. Yes, now. Now, please now, only now, not anything else only this now, and where are you and where am I and where is the other one, and not why, not ever why, only this now; and on and always please then always now, always now, for now always one now; one only one, there is no other one but one now, one, going now, rising now, sailing now, leaving now, wheeling now, soaring now, away now, all the way now, all of all the way now; one and one is one, is one, is one, is one, is still one, is still one, is one descendingly, is one softly, is one longingly, is one kindly, is one happily, is one in goodness, is one to cherish, is one now on earth with elbows against the cut and slept-on branches of the pine tree with the smell of the pine boughs and the night; to earth conclusively now, and with the morning of the day to come.

Then he said, for the other was only in his head and he had said nothing, “Oh, Maria, I love thee and I thank thee for this.”

Maria said, “Do not speak. It is better if we do not speak.”

“I must tell thee for it is a great thing.”

“Nay.”

“Rabbit—”

But she held him tight and turned her head away and he asked softly, “Is it pain, rabbit?”

“Nay,” she said. “It is that I am thankful too to have been another time in *la gloria.”*

Then afterwards they lay quiet, side by side, all length of ankle, thigh, hip and shoulder touching, Robert Jordan now with the watch where he could see it again and Maria said, “We have had much good fortune.”

“Yes,” he said, “we are people of much luck.”

“There is not time to sleep?”

“No,” he said, “it starts soon now.”

“Then if we must rise let us go to get something to eat.”

“All right.”

“Thou. Thou art not worried about anything?”

“No.”

“Truly?”

“No. Not now.”

“But thou hast worried before?”

“For a while.”

“Is it aught I can help?”

“Nay,” he said. “You have helped enough.”

“That? That was for me.”

“That was for us both,” he said. “No one is there alone. Come, rabbit, let us dress.”

But his mind, that was his best companion, was thinking La Gloria. She said La Gloria. It has nothing to do with glory nor La Gloire that the French write and speak about. It is the thing that is

in the Cante Hondo and in the Saetas. It is in Greco and in San Juan de la Cruz, of course, and in the others. I am no mystic, but to deny it is as ignorant as though you denied the telephone or that the earth revolves around the sun or that there are other planets than this.

How little we know of what there is to know. I wish that I were going to live a long time instead of going to die today because I have learned much about life in these four days; more, I think, than in all the other time. I'd like to be an old man and to really know. I wonder if you keep on learning or if there is only a certain amount each man can understand. I thought I knew about so many things that I know nothing of. I wish there was more time.

"You taught me a lot, *guapa,"* he said in English.

"What did you say?"

"I have learned much from thee."

"Qué va," she said, "it is thou who art educated."

Educated, he thought. I have the very smallest beginnings of an education. The very small beginnings. If I die on this day it is a waste because I know a few things now. I wonder if you only learn them now because you are oversensitized because of the shortness of the time? There is no such thing as a shortness of time, though. You should have sense enough to know that too. I have been all my life in these hills since I have been here. Anselmo is my oldest friend. I know him better than I know Charles, than I know Chub, than I know Guy, than I know Mike, and I know them well. Agustín, with his vile mouth, is my brother, and I never had a brother. Maria is my true love and my wife. I never had a true love. I never had a wife. She is also my sister, and I never had a sister, and my daughter, and I never will have a daughter. I hate to leave a thing that is so good. He finished tying his rope-soled shoes.

"I find life very interesting," he said to Maria. She was sitting beside him on the robe, her hands clasped around her ankles. Some one moved the blanket aside from the entrance to the cave and they

both saw the light. It was night still and here was no promise of morning except that as he looked up through the pines he saw how low the stars had swung. The morning would be coming fast now in this month.

"Roberto," Maria said.

"Yes, *guapa*."

"In this of today we will be together, will we not?"

"After the start, yes."

"Not at the start?"

"No. Thou wilt be with the horses."

"I cannot be with thee?"

"No. I have work that only I can do and I would worry about thee."

"But you will come fast when it is done?"

"Very fast," he said and grinned in the dark. "Come, *guapa,* us go and eat."

"And thy robe?"

"Roll it up, if it pleases thee."

"I t pleases me," she said.

"I will help thee."

"Nay. Let me do it alone."

She knelt to spread and roll the robe, then changed her mind and stood up and shook it so it flapped. Then she knelt down again to straighten it and roll it. Robert Jordan picked up the two packs, holding them carefully so that nothing would spill from the slits in them, and walked over through the pines to the cavemouth where the smoky blanket hung. It was ten minutes to three by his watch when he pushed the blanket aside with his elbow and went into the cave.

Chapter Thirty-Eight

They were in the cave and the men were standing before the fire Maria was fanning. Pilar had coffee ready in a pot. She had not gone back to bed at all since she had roused Robert Jordan and now she was sitting on a stool in the smoky cave sewing the rip in one of Jordan's packs. The other pack was already sewed. The firelight lit up her face.

"Take more of the stew," she said to Fernando. "What does it matter if thy belly should be full? There is no doctor to operate if you take a goring."

"Don't speak that way, woman," Agustín said. "Thou hast the tongue of the great whore."

He was leaning on the automatic rifle, its legs folded close against the fretted barrel, his pockets were full of grenades, a sack of pans hung from one shoulder, and a full bandolier of ammunition hung over the other shoulder. He was smoking a cigarette and he held a bowl of coffee in one hand and blew smoke onto its surface as he raised it to his lips.

"Thou art a walking hardware store," Pilar said to him. "Thou canst not walk a hundred yards with all that."

"Qué va, woman," Agustín said. "It is all downhill."

"There is a climb to the post," Fernando said. "Before the downward slope commences."

"I will climb it like a goat," Agustín said.

"And thy brother?" he asked Eladio. "Thy famous brother has mucked off?"

Eladio was standing against the wall.

“Shut up,” he said.

He was nervous and he knew they all knew it. He was always nervous and irritable before action. He moved from the wall to the table and began filling his pockets with grenades from one of the raw-hide-covered panniers that leaned, open, against the table leg.

Robert Jordan squatted by the pannier beside him. He reached into the pannier and picked out four grenades. Three were the oval Mill bomb type, serrated, heavy iron with a spring level held down in position by a cotter pin with pulling rig attached.

“Where did these come from?” he asked Eladio.

“Those? Those are from the Republic. The old man brought them.”

How are they?”

“Valen mas qué pesan,” Eladio said. “They are worth a fortune apiece.”

“I brought those,” Anselmo said. “Sixty in one pack. Ninety pounds, *Inglés.”*

“Have you used those?” Robert Jordan asked Pilar.

“Qué va have we used them?” the woman said. “It was with those Pablo slew the post at Otero.”

When she mentioned Pablo, Agustín started cursing. Robert Jordan saw the look on Pilar’s face in the firelight.

“Leave it,” she said to Agustín sharply. “It does no good to talk.”

“Have they always exploded?” Robert Jordan held the graypainted grenade in his hand, trying the bend of the cotter pin with his thumbnail.

“Always,” Eladio said. “There was not a dud in any of that lot we used.”

“And how quickly?”

“In the distance one can throw it. Quickly. Quickly enough.”

“And these?”

He held up a soup-tin-shaped bomb, with a tape wrapping around a wire loop.

“They are a garbage,” Eladio told him. “They blow. Yes. But it is all flash and no fragments.”

“But do they always blow?”

“Qué va, always,” Pilar said. “There is no always either with our munitions or theirs.”

“But you said the other always blew.”

“Not me,” Pilar told him. “You asked another, not me. I have seen no *always* in any of that stuff.”

“They all blew,” Eladio insisted. “Speak the truth, woman.”

“How do you know they all blew?” Pilar asked him. “It was Pablo who threw them. You killed no one at Otero.”

“That son of the great whore,” Agustín began.

“Leave it alone,” Pilar said sharply. Then she went on. “They are all much the same, *Inglés.* But the corrugated ones are more simple.”

I’d better use one of each on each set, Robert Jordan thought. But the serrated type will lash easier and more securely.

“Are you going to be throwing bombs, *Inglés?”* Agustín asked.

“Why not?” Robert Jordan said.

But crouched there, sorting out the grenades, what he was thinking was: it is impossible. How I could have deceived myself about it I do not know. We were as sunk when they attacked Sordo as Sordo was sunk when the snow stopped. It is that you can’t accept it. You have to go on and make a plan that you know is impossible to carry out. You made it and now you know it is no good. It’s no good, now, in the morning. You can take either of the posts absolutely O.K. with what you’ve got here. But you can’t take them both. You can’t be sure of it, I mean. Don’t deceive yourself. Not when the daylight comes.

Trying to take them both will never work. Pablo knew that all the time. I suppose he always intended to muck off but he knew we were cooked when Sordo was attacked. You can’t base an operation on the presumption that miracles are going to happen. You will kill them all off and not even get your bridge blown if you have nothing

better than what you have now. You will kill off Pilar, Anselmo, Agustín, Primitivo, this jumpy Eladio, the worthless gypsy and old Fernando, and you won't get your bridge blown. Do you suppose there will be a miracle and Golz will get the message from Andrés and stop it? If there isn't, you are going to kill them all off with those orders. Maria too. You'll kill her too with those orders. Can't you even get her out of it? God damn Pablo to hell, he thought.

No. Don't get angry. Getting angry is as bad as getting scared. But instead of sleeping with your girl you should have ridden all night through these hills with the woman to try to dig up enough people to make it work. Yes, he thought. And if anything happened to me so I was not here to blow it. Yes. That. That's why you weren't out. And you couldn't send anybody out because you couldn't run a chance of losing them and being short one more. You had to keep what you had and make a plan to do it with them.

But your plan stinks. It stinks, I tell you. It was a night plan and it's morning now. Night plans aren't any good in the morning. The way you think at night is no good in the morning. So now you know it is no good.

What if John Mosby did get away with things as impossible as this? Sure he did. Much more difficult. And remember, do not undervaluate the element of surprise. Remember that. Remember it isn't goofy if you can make it stick. But that is not the way you are supposed to make it. You should make it not only possible but sure. But look at how it all has gone. Well, it was wrong in the first place and such things accentuate disaster as a snowball rolls up wet snow.

He looked up from where he was squatted by the table and saw Maria and she smiled at him. He grinned back with the front of his face and selected four more grenades and put them in his pockets. I could unscrew the detonators and just use them, he thought. But I don't think the fragmentation will have any bad effect. It will come instantaneously with the explosion of the charge and it won't disperse it. At least, I don't think it will. I'm sure it won't. Have a

little confidence, he told himself. And you, last night, thinking about how you and your grandfather were so terrific and your father was a coward. Show yourself a little confidence now.

He grinned at Maria again but the grin was still no deeper than the skin that felt tight over his cheekbones and his mouth.

She thinks you're wonderful, he thought. I think you stink. And the *gloria* and all that nonsense that you had. You had wonderful ideas, didn't you? You had this world all taped, didn't you? The hell with all of that.

Take it easy, he told himself. Don't get into a rage. That's just a way out too. There are always ways out. You've got to bite on the nail now. There isn't any need to deny everything there's been just because you are going to lose it. Don't be like some damned snake with a broken back biting at itself; and your back isn't broken either, you hound. Wait until you're hurt before you start to cry. Wait until the fight before you get angry. There's lots of time for it in a fight. It will be some use to you in a fight.

Pilar came over to him with the bag.

"It is strong now," she said. "Those grenades are very good, *Inglés.* You can have confidence in them."

"How do you feel, woman?"

She looked at him and shook her head and smiled. He wondered how far into her face the smile went. It looked deep enough.

"Good," she said. *"Dentro de la graoedad."*

Then she said, squatting by him, "How does it seem to thee now that it is really starting?"

"That we are few," Robert Jordan said to her quickly.

"To me, too," she said. "Very few."

Then she said still to him alone, "The Maria can hold the horses by herself. I am not needed for that. We will hobble them. They are cavalry horses and the firing will not panic them. I will go to the lower post and do that which was the duty of Pablo. In this way we are one more."

"Good," he said. "I thought you might wish to."

"Nay, *Inglés,"* Pilar said looking at him closely. "Do not be worried. All will be well. Remember they expect no such thing to come to them."

"Yes," Robert Jordan said.

"One other thing, *Inglés,"* Pilar said as softly as her harsh whispercould be soft. "In that thing of the hand—"

"What thing of the hand?" he said angrily.

"Nay, listen. Do not be angry, little boy. In regard to that thing of the hand. That is all gypsy nonsense that I make to give myself an importance. There is no such thing."

"Leave it alone," he said coldly.

"Nay," she said harshly and lovingly. "It is just a lying nonsense that I make. I would not have thee worry in the day of battle."

"I am not worried," Robert Jordan said.

"Yes, *Inglés,"* she said. "Thou art very worried, for good cause. But all will be well, *Inglés.* It is for this that we are born."

"I don't need a political commissar," Robert Jordan told her.

She smiled at him again, smiling fairly and truly with the harsh lips and the wide mouth, and said, "I care for thee very much, *Inglés."*

"I don't want that now," he said. *"Ni tu, ni Dios."*

"Yes," Pilar said in that husky whisper. "I know. I only wished to tell thee. And do not worry. We will do all very well."

"Why not?" Robert Jordan said and the very thinnest edge of the skin in front of his face smiled. "Of course we will. All will be well."

"When do we go?" Pilar asked.

Robert Jordan looked at his watch.

"Any time," he said.

He handed one of the packs to Anselmo.

"How are you doing, old one?" he asked.

The old man was finishing whittling the last of a pile of wedges he had copied from a model Robert Jordan had given him. These

were extra wedges in case they should be needed.

"Well," the old man said and nodded. "So far, very well." He held his hand out. "Look," he said and smiled. His hands were perfectly steady.

"Bueno, y qué?" Robert Jordan said to him. "I can always keep the whole hand steady. Point with one finger."

Anselmo pointed. The finger was trembling. He looked at Robert Jordan and shook his head.

"Mine too," Robert Jordan showed him. "Always. That is normal."

"Not for me," Fernando said. He put his right forefinger out to show them. Then the left forefinger.

"Canst thou spit?" Agustín asked him and winked at Robert Jordan.

Fernando hawked and spat proudly onto the Aoor of the cave, then rubbed it in the dirt with his foot.

"You filthy mule," Pilar said to him. "Spit in the fire if thou must vaunt thy courage."

"I would not have spat on the Aoor, Pilar, if we were not leaving this place," Fernando said primly.

"Be careful where you spit today," Pilar told him. "It may be some place you will not be leaving."

"That one speaks like a black cat," Agustín said. He had the nervous necessity to joke that is another form of what they all felt.

"I joke," said Pilar.

"Me too," said Agustín. "But *me cago en la leche,* but I will be content when it starts."

"Where is the gypsy?" Robert Jordan asked Eladio.

"With the horses," Eladio said. "You can see him from the cave mouth."

"How is he?"

Eladio grinned. "With much fear," he said. It reassured him to speak of the fear of another.

“Listen, *Inglés—”* Pilar began. Robert Jordan looked toward her and as he did he saw her mouth open and the unbelieving look come on her face and he swung toward the cave mouth reaching for his pistol. There, holding the blanket aside with one hand, the short automatic riAe muzzle with its flash-cone jutting above his shoulder, was Pablo standing short, wide, bristly-faced, his small red-rimmed eyes looking toward no one in particular.

“Thou—” Pilar said to him unbelieving. “Thou.”

“Me,” said Pablo evenly. He came into the cave.

“Hola, Inglés,” he said. “I have five from the bands of Elias and Alejandro above with their horses.”

“And the exploder and the detonators?” Robert Jordan said. “And the other material?”

“I threw them down the gorge into the river,” Pablo said still looking at no one. “But I have thought of a way to detonate using a grenade.”

“So have I,” Robert Jordan said.

“Have you a drink of anything?” Pablo asked wearily. Robert Jordan handed him the Aask and he swallowed fast, then wiped his mouth on the back of his hand.

“What passes with you?” Pilar asked.

“Nada,” Pablo said, wiping his mouth again. “Nothing. I have come back.”

“But what?”

“Nothing. I had a moment of weakness. I went away but I am come back.”

He turned to Robert Jordan. *“En el fonda no soy cobarde,”* he said. “At bottom I am not a coward.”

But you are very many other things, Robert Jordan thought. Damned if you’re not. But I’m glad to see you, you son of a bitch.

“Five was all I could get from Elias and Alejandro,” Pablo said. “I have ridden since I left here. Nine of you could never have done it. Never. I knew that last night when the *Inglés* explained it. Never.

There are seven men and a corporal at the lower post. Suppose there is an alarm or that they fight?"

He looked at Robert Jordan now. "When I left I thought you would know that it was impossible and would give it up. Then after I had thrown away thy material I saw it in another manner."

"I am glad to see thee," Robert Jordan said. He walked over to him. "We are all right with the grenades. That will work. The other does not matter now."

"Nay," Pablo said. "I do nothing for thee. Thou art a thing of bad omen. All of this comes from thee. Sordo also. But after 1 had thrown away thy material I found myself too lonely."

"Thy mother—" Pilar said.

"So I rode for the others to make it possible for it to be successful. I have brought the best that I could get. I have left them at the top so I could speak to you, first. They think I am the leader."

"Thou art," Pilar said. "If thee wishes." Pablo looked at her and said nothing. Then he said simply and quietly, "I have thought much since the thing of Sordo. 1 believe if we must finish we must finish together. But thou, *Inglés.* I hate thee for bringing this to us."

"But Pablo—" Fernando, his pockets full of grenades, a bandolier of cartridges over his shoulder, he still wiping in his pan of stew with a piece of bread, began. "Do you not believe the operation can be successful? Night before last you said you were convinced it would be."

"Give him some more stew," Pilar said viciously to Maria. Then to Pablo, her eyes softening, "So you have come back, eh?"

"Yes, woman," Pablo said.

"Well, thou art welcome," Pilar said to him. "I did not think thou couldst be the ruin thou appeared to be."

"Having done such a thing there is a loneliness that cannot be borne," Pablo said to her quietly.

"That cannot be borne," she mocked him. "That cannot be borne by thee for fifteen minutes."

“Do not mock me, woman. I have come back.”

“And thou art welcome,” she said. “Didst not hear me the first time? Drink thy coffee and let us go. So much theatre tires me.”

“Is that coffee?” Pablo asked.

“Certainly,” Fernando said.

“Give me some, Maria,” Pablo said. “How art thou?” He did not look at her.

“Well,” Maria told him and brought him a bowl of coffee. “Do you want stew?” Pablo shook his head.

“No me gusta estar solo,” Pablo went on explaining to Pilar as though the others were not there. “I do not like to be alone. *Sabes?* Yesterday all day alone working for the good of all I was not lonely. But last night. *Hombre! Qué mal lo pasé!”*

“Thy predecessor the famous Judas Iscariot hanged himself,” Pilar said.

“Don’t talk to me that way, woman,” Pablo said. “Have you not seen? I am back. Don’t talk of Judas nor nothing of that. I am back.”

“How are these people thee brought?” Pilar asked him. “Hast brought anything worth bringing?”

“Son buenos,” Pablo said. He took a chance and looked at Pilar squarely, then looked away.

“Buenos y bobos. Good ones and stupids. Ready to die and all. *A tu gusto.* According to thy taste. The way you like them.”

Pablo looked Pilar in the eyes again and this time he did not look away. He kept on looking at her squarely with his small, red-rimmed pig eyes.

“Thou,” she said and her husky voice was fond again. “Thou. I suppose if a man has something once, always something of it remains.”

“Listo,” Pablo said, looking at her squarely and flatly now. “I am ready for what the day brings.”

“I believe thou art back,” Pilar said to him. “I believe it. But, *hombre,* thou wert a long way gone.”

“Lend me another swallow from thy bottle,” Pablo said to Robert Jordan. “And then let us be going.”

Chapter Thirty-Nine

In the dark they came up the hill through the timber to the narrow pass at the top. They were all loaded heavily and they climbed slowly. The horses had loads too, packed over the saddles.

"We can cut them loose if it is necessary," Pilar had said. "But with that, if we can keep it, we can make another camp."

"And the rest of the ammunition?" Robert Jordan had asked as they lashed the packs.

"In those saddle bags."

Robert Jordan felt the weight of his heavy pack, the dragging on his neck from the pull of his jacket with its pockets full of grenades, the weight of his pistol against his thigh, and the bulging of his trouser pockets where the clips for the submachine gun were. In his mouth was the taste of the coffee, in his right hand he carried the submachine gun and with his left hand he reached and pulled up the collar of his jacket to ease the pull of the pack straps.

"Inglés" Pablo said to him, walking close beside him in the dark.

"What, man?"

"These I have brought think this is to be successful because I have brought them," Pablo said. "Do not say anything to disillusion them."

"Good," Robert Jordan said. "But let us make it successful."

"They have five horses, *sabes?"* Pablo said cautiously.

"Good," said Robert Jordan. "We will keep all the horses together."

"Good," said Pablo, and nothing more.

I didn't think you had experienced any complete conversion on

the road to Tarsus, old Pablo, Robert Jordan thought. No. Your coming back was miracle enough. I don't think there will ever be any problem about canonizing you.

"With those five I will deal with the lower post as well as Sordo would have," Pablo said. "I will cut the wire and fall back upon the bridge as we convened."

We went over this all ten minutes ago, Robert Jordan thought. I wonder why this now—

"There is a possibility of making it to Gredos," Pablo said. "Truly, I have thought much of it."

I believe you've had another flash in the last few minutes, Robert Jordan said to himself. You have had another revelation. But you're not going to convince me that I am invited. No, Pablo. Do not ask me to believe too much.

Ever since Pablo had come into the cave and said he had five men Robert Jordan felt increasingly better. Seeing Pablo again had broken the pattern of tragedy into which the whole operation had seemed grooved ever since the snow, and since Pablo had been back he felt not that his luck had turned, since he did not believe in luck, but that the whole thing had turned for the better and that now it was possible. Instead of the surety of failure he felt confidence rising in him as a tire begins to fill with air from a slow pump. There was little difference at first, although there was a definite beginning, as when the pump starts and the rubber of the tube crawls a little, but it came now as steadily as a tide rising or the sap rising in a tree until he began to feel the first edge of that negation of apprehension that often turned into actual happiness before action.

This was the greatest gift that he had, the talent that fitted him for war; that ability not to ignore but to despise whatever bad ending there could be. This quality was destroyed by too much responsibility for others or the necessity of undertaking something ill planned or badly conceived. For in such things the bad ending,

failure, could not be ignored. It was not simply a possibility of harm to one's self, which *could* be ignored. He knew he himself was nothing, and he knew death was nothing. He knew that truly, as truly as he knew anything. In the last few days he had learned that he himself, with another person, could be everything. But inside himself he knew that this was the exception. That we have had, he thought. In that I have been most fortunate. That was given to me, perhaps, because I never asked for it. That cannot be taken away nor lost. But that is over and done with now on this morning and what there is to do now is our work.

And you, he said to himself, I am glad to see you getting a little I something back that was badly missing for a time. But you were pretty bad back there. I was ashamed enough of you, there for a while. Only I was you. There wasn't any me to judge you. We were all in bad shape. You and me and both of us. Come on now. Quit thinking like a schizophrenic. One at a time, now. You're all right again now. But listen, you must not think of the girl all day ever. You can do nothing now to protect her except to keep her out of it, and that you are doing. There are evidently going to be plenty of horses if you can believe the signs. The best thing you can do for her is to do the job well and fast and get out, and thinking of her will only handicap you in this. So do not think of her ever.

Having thought this out he waited until Maria came up walking with Pilar and Rafael and the horses.

"Hi, *guapa,* " he said to her in the dark, "how are you?"

"I am well, Roberto," she said.

"Don't worry about anything," he said to her and shifting the gun to his left hand he put a hand on her shoulder.

"I do not," she said.

"It is all very well organized," he told her. "Rafael will be with thee with the horses."

"I would rather be with thee."

"Nay. The horses is where thou art most useful."

“Good,” she said. “There I will be.”

Just then one of the horses whinnied and from the open place below the opening through the rocks a horse answered, the neigh rising into a shrill sharply broken quaver.

Robert Jordan saw the bulk of the new horses ahead in the dark. He pressed forward and came up to them with Pablo. The men were standing by their mounts.

“Salud, “ Robert Jordan said.

“Salud, “ they answered in the dark. He could not see their faces.

“This is the *Inglés* who comes with us,” Pablo said. “The dynamiter.”

No one said anything to that. Perhaps they nodded in the dark.

“Let us get going, Pablo,” one man said. “Soon we will have the daylight on us.”

“Did you bring any more grenades?” another asked.

“Plenty,” said Pablo. “Supply yourselves when we leave the animals.”

“Then let us go,” another said. “We’ve been waiting here half the night.”

“Hola, Pilar,” another said as the woman came up.

“Qué me maten, if it is not Pepe,” Pilar said huskily. “How are you, shepherd?”

“Good,” said the man. *“Dentro de la graoedad.”*

“What are you riding?” Pilar asked him.

“The gray of Pablo,” the man said. “It is much horse.”

“Come on,” another man said. “Let us go. There is no good in gossiping here.”

“How art thou, Elicio?” Pilar said to him as he mounted.

“How would I be?” he said rudely. “Come on, woman, we have work to do.”

Pablo mounted the big bay horse.

“Keep thy mouths shut and follow me,” he said. “I will lead you to the place where we will leave the horses.

Chapter Forty

During the time that Robert Jordan had slept through, the time he had spent planning the destruction of the bridge and the time that he had been with Maria, Andrés had made slow progress. Until he had reached the Republican lines he had travelled across country and through the fascist lines as fast as a countryman in good physical condition who knew the country well could travel in the dark. But once inside the Republican lines it went very slowly.

In theory he should only have had to show the safe-conduct given him by Robert Jordan stamped with the seal of the S. I. M. and the dispatch which bore the same seal and be passed along toward his destination with the greatest speed. But first he had encountered the company commander in the front line who had regarded the whole mission with owlishly grave suspicion.

He had followed this company commander to battalion headquarters where the battalion commander, who had been a barber before the movement, was filled with enthusiasm on hearing the account of his mission. This commander, who was named Gomez, cursed the company commander for his stupidity, patted Andrés on the back, gave him a drink of bad brandy and told him that he himself, the ex-barber, had always wanted to be a *guerrillero.* He had then roused his adjutant, turned over the battalion to him, and sent his orderly to wake up and bring his motorcyclist. Instead of sending Andrés back to brigade headquarters with the motorcyclist, Gomez had decided to take him there himself in order to expedite things and, with Andrés holding tight onto the seat ahead of him, they roared, bumping down the

shell-pocked mountain road between the double row of big trees, the headlight of the motorcycle showing their whitewashed bases and the places on the trunks where the whitewash and the bark had been chipped and torn by shell fragments and bullets during the fighting along this road in the first summer of the movement. They turned into the little smashed-roofed mountain-resort town where brigade headquarters was and Gomez had braked the motorcycle like a dirt-track racer and leaned it against the wall of the house where a sleepy sentry came to attention as Gomez pushed by him into the big room where the walls were covered with maps and a very sleepy officer with a green eyeshade sat at a desk with a reading lamp, two telephones and a copy of *Mundo Obrero.*

This officer looked up at Gomez and said, "What doest thou here? Have you never heard of the telephone?"

"I must see the Lieutenant-Colonel," Gomez said.

"He is asleep," the officer said. "I could see the lights of that bicycle of thine for a mile coming down the road. Dost wish to bring on a shelling?"

"Call the Lieutenant-Colonel," Gomez said. "This is a matter of the utmost gravity."

"He is asleep, I tell thee," the officer said. "What sort of a bandit is that with thee?" he nodded toward Andrés.

"He is a *guerrillero* from the other side of the lines with a dispatch of the utmost importance for the General Golz who commands the attack that is to be made at dawn beyond Navacerrada," Gomez said excitedly and earnestly. "Rouse the *Teniente-Coronel* for the love of God."

The officer looked at him with his droopy eyes shaded by the green celluloid.

"All of you are crazy," he said. "I know of no General Golz nor of no attack. Take this sportsman and get back to your battalion."

"Rouse the *Teniente-Coronel,* I say," Gomez said and Andrés saw his mouth tightening.

“Go obscenity yourself,” the officer said to him lazily and turned away.

Gomez took his heavy 9 mm. Star pistol out of its holster and shoved it against the officer’s shoulder.

“Rouse him, you fascist bastard,” he said. “Rouse him or I’ll kill you.”

“Calm yourself,” the officer said. “All you barbers are emotional.”

Andrés saw Gomez’s face draw with hate in the light of the reading lamp. But all he said was, “Rouse him.”

“Orderly,” the officer called in a contemptuous voice.

A soldier came to the door and saluted and went out.

“His fiancée is with him,” the officer said and went back to reading the paper. “It is certain he will be delighted to see you.”

“It is those like thee who obstruct all effort to win this war,” Gomez said to the staff officer.

The officer paid no attention to him. Then, as he read on, he remarked, as though to himself, “What a curious periodical this is!”

“Why don›t you real *El Debate* then? That is your paper,” Gomez said to him naming the leading Catholic-Conservative organ published in Madrid before the movement.

“Don’t forget I am thy superior officer and that a report by me on thee carries weight,” the officer said without looking up. “I never read *EI Debate.* Do not make false accusations.”

“No. You read A. B. C.,” Gomez said. “The army is still rotten with such as thee. With professionals such as thee. But it will not always be. We are caught between the ignorant and the cynical. But we will educate the one and eliminate the other.”

“’Purge’ is the word you want,” the officer said, still not looking up. “Here it reports the purging of more of thy famous Russians. They are purging more than the epsom salts in this epoch.”

“By any name,” Gomez said passionately. “By any name so that such as thee are liquidated.”

“Liquidated,” the officer said insolently as though speaking to himself. “Another new word that has little of Castilian in it.”

“Shot, then,” Gomez said. “That is Castilian. Canst understand it?”

“Yes, man, but do not talk so loudly. There are others beside the *Teniente-Coronel* asleep in this Brigade Staff and thy emotion bores me. It was for that reason that I always shaved myself. I never liked the conversation.”

Gomez looked at Andrés and shook his head. His eyes were shining with the moistness that rage and hatred can bring. But he shook his head and said nothing as he stored it all away for some time in the future. He had stored much in the year and a half in which he had risen to the command of a battalion in the Sierra and now, as the Lieutenant-Colonel came into the room in his pajamas he drew himself stiff and saluted.

The Lieutenant-Colonel Miranda, who was a short, gray-faced man, who had been in the army all his life, who had lost the love of his wife in Madrid while he was losing his digestion in Mo- rocco, and become a Republican when he found he could not divorce his wife (there was never any question of recovering his digestion), had entered the civil war as a Lieutenant-Colonel. He had only one ambition, to finish the war with the same rank. He had defended the Sierra well and he wanted to be left alone there to defend it whenever it was attacked. He felt much healthier in the war, probably due to the forced curtailment of the number of meat courses, he had an enormous stock of sodium-bicarbonate, he had his whiskey in the evening, his twenty-three-year-old mistress was having a baby, as were nearly all the other girls who had started out as *milicianas* in the July of the year before, and now he came into the room, nodded in answer to Gomez’s salute and put out his hand.

“What brings thee, Gomez?” he asked and then, to the officer at the desk who was his chief of operation, “Give me a cigarette,

please, Pepe."

Gomez showed him Andrés's papers and the dispatch. The Lieutenant-Colonel looked at the *Salooconducto* quickly, looked at Andrés, nodded and smiled, and then looked at the dispatch hungrily. He felt of the seal, tested it with his forefinger, then handed both the safe-conduct and dispatch back to Andrés.

"Is the life very hard there in the hills?" he asked.

"No, my Lieutenant-Colonel," Andrés said.

"Did they tell thee where would be the closest point to find General Golz's headquarters?"

"Navacerrada, my Lieutenant-Colonel," Andrés said. "The *Inglés* said it would be somewhere close to Navacerrada behind the lines to the right of there."

"What *Inglés?"* the Lieutenant-Colonel asked quietly.

"The *Inglés* who is with us as a dynamiter."

The Lieutenant-Colonel nodded. It was just another sudden unexplained rarity of this war. "The *Inglés* who is with us as a dynamiter."

"You had better take him, Gomez, on the motor," the Lieutenant- Colonel said. "Write them a very strong *Saluoconducto* to the *Estado Mayor* of General Golz for me to sign," he said to the officer in the green celluloid eyeshade. "Write it on the machine, Pepe. Here are the details," he motioned for Andrés to hand over his safeconduct, "and put on two seals." He turned to Gomez. "You will need something strong tonight. It is rightly so. People should be careful when an offensive is projected. I will give you something as strong as I can make it." Then to Andrés, very kindly, he said, "Dost wish anything? To eat or to drink?"

"No, my Lieutenant-Colonel," Andrés said. "I am not hungry. They gave me cognac at the last place of command and more would make me seasick."

"Did you see any movement or activity opposite my front as you came through?" the Lieutenant-Colonel asked Andrés politely.

"It was as usual, my Lieutenant-Colonel. Quiet. Quiet."

"Did I not meet thee in Cercedilla about three months back?" the Lieutenant-Colonel asked.

"Yes, my Lieutenant-Colonel."

"I thought so," the Lieutenant-Colonel patted him on the shoulder.

"You were with the old man Anselmo. How is he?"

"He is well, my Lieutenant-Colonel," Andrés told him.

"Good. It makes me happy," the Lieutenant-Colonel said. The officer showed him what he had typed and he read it over and signed it. "You must go now quickly," he said to Gomez and Andrés. "Be careful with the motor," he said to Gomez. "Use your lights. Nothing will happen from a single motor and you must be careful. My compliments to Comrade General Golz. We met after Peguerinos." He shook hands with them both. "Button the papers inside thy shirt," he said. "There is much wind on a motor."

After they went out he went to a cabinet, took out a glass and a bottle, and poured himself some whiskey and poured plain water into it from an earthenware crock that stood on the floor against the wall. Then holding the glass and sipping the whiskey very slowly he stood in front of the big map on the wall and studied the offensive possibilities in the country above Navacerrada.

"I am glad it is Golz and not me," he said finally to the officer who sat at the table. The officer did not answer and looking away from the map and at the officer the Lieutenant-Colonel saw he was asleep with his head on his arms. The Lieutenant-Colonel went over to the desk and pushed the two phones close together so that one touched the officer's head on either side. Then he walked to the cupboard, poured himself another whiskey, put water in it, and went back to the map again.

Andrés, holding tight onto the seat where Gomez was forking the motor, bent his head against the wind as the motorcycle moved, noisily exploding, into the light-split darkness of the country road

that opened ahead sharp with the high black of the poplars beside it, dimmed and yellow-soft now as the road dipped into the fog along a steam bed, sharpening hard again as the road rose and, ahead of them at the crossroads, the headlight showed the gray bulk of the empty trucks coming down from the mountains

Chapter Forty-One

Pablo stopped and dismounted in the dark. Robert Jordan heard the creaking and the heavy breathing as they all dismounted and the clinking of a bridle as a horse tossed his head. He smelled the horses and the unwashed and sour slept-in-c1othing smell of the new men and the wood-smoky sleep-stale smell of the others who had been in the cave. Pablo was standing close to him and he smelled the brassy, dead-wine smell that came from him like the taste of a copper coin in your mouth. He lit a cigarette, cupping his hand to hide the light, pulled deep on it, and heard Pablo say very softly, "Get the grenade sack, Pilar, while we hobble these."

"Agustín," Robert Jordan said in a whisper, "you and Anselmo come now with me to the bridge. Have you the sack of pans for the *máquina?"*

"Yes," Agustín said. "Why not?"

Robert Jordan went over to where Pilar was unpacking one of the horses with the help of Primitivo.

"Listen, woman," he said softly.

"What now?" she whispered huskily, swinging a cinch hook clear from under the horse's belly.

"Thou understandest that there is to be no attack on the post until thou hearest the falling of the bombs?"

"How many times dost thou have to tell me?" Pilar said. "You are getting like an old woman, *Inglés."*

"Only to check," Robert Jordan said. "And after the destruction of the post you fall back onto the bridge and cover the road from above and my left flank."

“The first time thou outlined it I understood it as well as I will ever understand it,” Pilar whispered to him. “Get thee about thy business.”

“That no one should make a move nor fire a shot nor throw a bomb until the noise of the bombardment comes,” Robert Jordan said softly.

“Do not molest me more,” Pilar whispered angrily. “I have understood this since we were at Sordo’s.”

Robert Jordan went to where Pablo was tying the horses. “I have only hobbled those which are liable to panic,” Pablo said. “These are tied so a pull of the rope will release them, see?”

“Good.”

“I will tell the girl and the gypsy how to handle them,” Pablo said. His new men were standing in a group by themselves leaning on their carbines.

“Dost understand all?” Robert Jordan asked.

“Why not?” Pablo said. “Destroy the post. Cut the wire. Fall back on the bridge. Cover the bridge until thou blowest.”

“And nothing to start until the commencement of the bombardment.”

“Thus it is.”

“Well then, much luck.”

Pablo grunted. Then he said, “Thou wilt cover us well with the *máquina* and with thy small *máquina* when we come back, eh, *Inglés?”*

“De la primera,” Robert Jordan said. “Off the top of the basket.”

“Then,” Pablo said. “Nothing more. But in that moment thou must be very careful, *Inglés.* It will not be simple to do that unless thou art very careful.”

“I will handle the *rndquina* myself,” Robert Jordan said to him.

“Hast thou much experience? For I am of no mind to be shot by Agustín with his belly full of good intentions.”

“I have much experience. Truly. And if Agustín uses either

máquina I will see that he keeps it way above thee. Above, above and above."

"Then nothing more," Pablo said. Then he said softly and confidentially,

"There is still a lack of horses."

The son of a bitch, Robert Jordan thought. Or does he think I did not understand him the first time.

"I go on foot," he said. "The horses are thy affair."

"Nay, there will be a horse for thee, *Inglés,"* Pablo said softly. "There will be horses for all of us."

"That is thy problem," Robert Jordan said. "Thou dost not have to count me. Hast enough rounds for thy new *máquina?"*

"Yes," Pablo said. "All that the cavalryman carried. I have fired only four to try it. I tried it yesterday in the high hills."

"We go now," Robert Jordan said. "We must be there early and well hidden."

"We all go now," Pablo said. *"Suerte, Inglés."*

I wonder what the bastard is planning now, Robert Jordan said. But I am pretty sure I know. Well, that is his, not mine. Thank God I do not know these new men.

He put his hand out and said, *"Suerte, Pablo,"* and their two hands gripped in the dark.

Robert Jordan, when he put his hand out, expected that it would be like grasping something reptilian or touching a leper. He did not know what Pablo's hand would feel like. But in the dark Pablo's hand gripped his hard and pressed it frankly and he returned the grip. Pablo had a good hand in the dark and feeling it gave Robert Jordan the strangest feeling he had felt that morning. We must be allies now, he thought. There was always much handshaking with allies. Not to mention decorations and kissing on both cheeks, he thought. I'm glad we do not have to do that. I suppose all allies are like this. They always hate each other *au fond.* But this Pablo is a strange man.

"Suerte, Pablo," he said and gripped the strange, firm, purposeful hand hard. "I will cover thee well. Do not worry."

"I am sorry for having taken thy material," Pablo said. "It was an equivocation."

"But thou has brought what we needed."

"I do not hold this of the bridge against thee, *Inglés,"* Pablo said. "I see a successful termination for it."

"What are you two doing? Becoming *maricones?"* Pilar said suddenly beside them in the dark. "That is all thou hast lacked," she said to Pablo. "Get along, *Inglés,* and cut thy Goodbyes short before this one steals the rest of thy explosive."

"Thou dost not understand me, woman," Pablo said. "The *Inglés* and I understand one another."

"Nobody understands thee. Neither God nor thy mother," Pilar said. "Nor I either. Get along, *Inglés.* Make thy Goodbyes with thy cropped head and go. *Me cago en tu padre,* but I begin to think thou art afraid to see the bull come out."

"Thy mother," Robert Jordan said.

"Thou never hadst one," Pilar whispered cheerfully. "Now go, because I have a great desire to start this and get it over with. Go with thy people," she said to Pablo. "Who knows how long their stern resolution is good for? Thou hast a couple that I would not trade thee for. Take them and go."

Robert Jordan slung his pack on his back and walked over to the horses to find Maria.

"Goodbye, *guapa,"* he said. "I will see thee soon."

He had an unreal feeling about all of this now as though he had said it all before or as though it were a train that were going, especially as though it were a train and he was standing on the platform of a railway station.

"Goodbye, Roberto," she said. "Take much care."

"Of course," he said. He bent his head to kiss her and his pack rolled forward against the back of his head so that his forehead

bumped hers hard. As this happened he knew this had happened before too.

"Don't cry," he said, awkward not only from the load.

"I do not," she said. "But come back quickly."

"Do not worry when you hear the firing. There is bound to be much firing."

"Nay. Only come back quickly."

"Goodbye, *guapa,"* he said awkwardly.

"Salad, Roberto."

Robert Jordan had not felt this young since he had taken the train at Red Lodge to go down to Billings to get the train there to go away to school for the first time. He had been afraid to go and he did not want anyone to know it and, at the station, just before the conductor picked up the box he would step up on to reach the steps of the day coach, his father had kissed him Goodbye and said, "May the Lord watch between thee and me while we are absent the one from the other." His father had been a very religious man and he had said it simply and sincerely. But his moustache had been moist and his eyes were damp with emotion and Robert Jordan had been so embarrassed by all of it, the damp religious sound of the prayer, and by his father kissing him Goodbye, that he had felt suddenly so much older than his father and sorry for him that he could hardly bear it.

After the train started he had stood on the rear platform and watched the station and the water tower grow smaller and smaller and the rails crossed by the ties narrowed toward a point where the station and the water tower stood now minute and tiny in the steady clicking that was taking him away.

The brakeman said, "Dad seemed to take your going sort of hard, Bob."

"Yes," he had said watching the sagebrush that ran from the edge of the road bed between the passing telegraph poles across to the streaming-by dusty stretching of the road. He was looking for

sage hens.

"You don't mind going away to school?"

"No," he had said and it was true.

It would not have been true before but it was true that minute and it was only now, at this parting, that he ever felt as young again as he had felt before that train left. He felt very young now and very awkward and he was saying Goodbye as awkwardly as one can be when saying Goodbye to a young girl when you are a boy in school, saying Goodbye at the front porch, not knowing whether to kiss the girl or not. Then he knew it was not the Goodbye he was being awkward about. It was the meeting he was going to. The Goodbye was only a part of the awkwardness he felt about the meeting.

You're getting them again, he told himself. But I suppose there is no one that does not feel that he is too young to do it. He would not put a name to it. Come on, he said to himself. Come on. It is too early for your second childhood.

"Goodbye, *guapa,"* he said. "Goodbye, rabbit."

"Goodbye, my Roberto," she said and he went over to where Anselmo and Agustín were standing and said, *"Vdmonos."* Anselmo swung his heavy pack up. Agustín, fully loaded since the cave, was leaning against a tree, the automatic rifle jutting over the top of his load.

"Good," he said, *"Vámonos."*

The three of them started down the hill. *"Buena suerte,* Don Roberto," Fernando said as the three of them passed him as they moved in single file between the trees. Fernando was crouched on his haunches a little way from where they passed but he spoke with great dignity.

"Buena suerte thyself, Fernando," Robert Jordan said.

"In everything thou doest," Agustín said.

"Thank you, Don Roberto," Fernando said, undisturbed by Agustín.

“That one is a phenomenon, *Inglés,”* Agustín whispered.

“I believe thee,” Robert Jordan said. “Can I help thee? Thou art loaded like a horse.”

“I am all right,” Agustín said. “Man, but I am content we are started.”

“Speak softly,” Anselmo said. “From now on speak little and softly.”

Walking carefully, downhill, Anselmo in the lead, Agustín next, Robert Jordan placing his feet carefully so that he would not slip, feeling the dead pine needles under his rope-soled shoes, bumping a tree root with one foot and putting a hand forward and feeling the cold metal jut of the automatic rifle barrel and the folded legs of the tripod, then working sideways down the hill, his shoes sliding and grooving the forest floor, putting his left hand out again and touching the rough bark of a tree trunk, then as he braced himself his hand feeling a smooth place, the base of the palm of his hand coming away sticky from the resinous sap where a blaze had been cut, they dropped down the steep wooded hillside to the point above the bridge where Robert Jordan and Anselmo had watched the first day.

Now Anselmo was halted by a pine tree in the dark and he took Robert Jordan’s wrist and whispered, so low Jordan could hardly hear him, “Look. There is the fire in his brazier.”

It was a point of light below where Robert Jordan knew the bridge joined the road.

“Here is where we watched,” Anselmo said. He took Robert Jordan’s hand and bent it down to touch a small fresh blaze low on a tree trunk. “This I marked while thou watched. To the right is where thou wished to put the *máquina.”*

“We will place it there.” “Good.”

They put the packs down behind the base of the pine trunks and the two of them followed Anselmo over to the level place where there was a clump of seedling pines.

“It is here,” Anselmo said. “Just here.”

“From here, with daylight,” Robert Jordan crouched behind the small trees whispered to Agustín, “thou wilt see a small stretch of road and the entrance to the bridge. Thou wilt see the length of the bridge and a small stretch of road at the other end before it rounds the curve of the rocks.”

Agustín said nothing.

“Here thou wilt lie while we prepare the exploding and fire on anything that comes from above or below.”

“Where is that light?” Agustín asked.

“In the sentry box at this end,” Robert Jordan whispered.

“Who deals with the sentries?”

“The old man and I, as I told thee. But if we do not deal with them, thou must fire into the sentry boxes and at them if thou seest them.”

“Yes. You told me that.”

“After the explosion when the people of Pablo come around that corner, thou must fire over their heads if others come after them. Thou must fire high above them when they appear in any event that others must not come. Understandest thou?”

“Why not? It is as thou saidst last night.”

“Hast any questions?”

“Nay. I have two sacks. I can load them from above where it will not be seen and bring them here.”

“But do no digging here. Thou must be as well hid as we were at the top.”

“Nay. I will bring the dirt in them in the dark. You will see. They will not show as I will fix them.”

“Thou are very close. *Sabes?* In the daylight this clump shows clearly from below.”

“Do not worry, *Inglés.* Where goest thou?”

“I go close below with the small *máquina* of mine. The old man will cross the gorge now to be ready for the box of the other end. It

faces in that direction." "Then nothing more," said Agustín. *"Salud, Inglés.* Hast thou tobacco?"

"Thou canst not smoke. It is too close."

"Nay. Just to hold in the mouth. To smoke later."

Robert Jordan gave him his cigarette case and Agustín took three cigarettes and put them inside the front Rap of his herdsman's Rat cap. He spread the legs of his tripod with the gun muzzle in the low pines and commenced unpacking his load by touch and laying the things where he wanted them.

"Nada mas," he said. "Well, nothing more."

Anselmo and Robert Jordan left him there and went back to where the packs were.

"Where had we best leave them?" Robert Jordan whispered.

"I think here. But canst thou be sure of the sentry with thy small *máquina* from here?"

"Is this exactly where we were on that day?"

"The same tree," Anselmo said so low Jordan could barely hear him and he knew he was speaking without moving his lips as he had spoken that first day. "I marked it with my knife."

Robert Jordan had the feeling again of it all having happened before, but this time it came from his own repetition of a query and Anselmo's answer. It had been the same with Agustín, who had asked a question about the sentries although he knew the answer.

"It is close enough. Even too close," he whispered. "But the light is behind us. We are all right here."

"Then I will go now to cross the gorge and be in position at the other end," Anselmo said. Then he said, "Pardon me, *Inglés.* So that there is no mistake. In case I am stupid."

"What?" breathed very softly.

"Only to repeat it so that I will do it exactly."

"When I fire, thou wilt fire. When thy man is eliminated, cross the bridge to me. I will have the packs down there and thou wilt do as I tell thee in the placing of the charges. Everything I will tell

thee. If aught happens to me do it thyself as I showed thee. Take thy time and do it well, wedging all securely with the wooden wedges and lashing the grenades firmly."

"It is all clear to me," Anselmo said. "I remember it all. Now I go. Keep thee well covered, *Inglés,* when daylight comes.

"When thou firest," Robert Jordan said, "take a rest and make very sure. Do not think of it as a man but as a target, *de acuerdo?* Do not shoot at the whole man but at a point. Shoot for the exact center of the belly-if he faces thee. At the middle of the back, if he is looking away. Listen, old one. When I fire if the man is sitting down he will stand up before he runs or crouches. Shoot then. If he is still sitting down shoot. Do not wait. But make sure. Get to within fifty yards. Thou art a hunter. Thou hast no problem."

"I will do as thou orderest," Anselmo said.

"Yes. I order it thus," Robert Jordan said. I'm glad I remembered to make it an order, he thought. That helps him out. That takes some of the curse off. I hope it does, anyway. Some of it. I had forgotten about what he told me that first day about the killing.

"It is thus I have ordered," he said. "Now go."

"Me uoy, " said Anselmo. "Until soon, *Inglés."*

"Until soon, old one," Robert Jordan said. He remembered his father in the railway station and the wetness of that farewell and he did not say *Salud* nor Goodbye nor good luck nor anything like that.

"Hast wiped the oil from the bore of thy gun, old one?" he whispered. "So it will not throw wild?"

"In the cave," Anselmo said. "I cleaned them all with the pullthrough."

"Then until soon," Robert Jordan said and the old man went off, noiseless on his rope-soled shoes, swinging wide through the trees.

Robert Jordan lay on the pine-needle floor of the forest and listened to the first stirring in the branches of the pines of the wind that would come with daylight. He took the clip out of the submachine gun and worked the lock back and forth. Then he

turned the gun, with the lock open and in the dark he put the muzzle to his lips and blew through the barrel, the metal tasting greasy and oily as his tongue touched the edge of the bore. He laid the gun across his forearm, the action up so that no pine needles or rubbish could get in it, and shucked all the cartridges out of the clip with his thumb and onto a handkerchief he had spread in front of him. Then, feeling each cartridge in the dark and turning it in his fingers, he pressed and slid them one at a time back into the clip. Now the clip was heavy again in his hand and he slid it back into the submachine gun and felt it click home. He lay on his belly behind the pine trunk, the gun across his left forearm and watched the point of light below him. Sometimes he could not see it and then he knew that the man in the sentry box had moved in front of the brazier. Robert Jordan lay there and waited for daylight.

Chapter Forty-Two

During the time that Pablo had ridden back from the hills to the cave and the time the band had dropped down to where they had left the horses Andrés had made rapid progress toward Golz's headquarters. Where they came onto the main highroad to Navacerrada on which the trucks were rolling back from the mountain there was a control. But when Gomez showed the sentry at the control his safe-conduct from the Lieutenant-Colonel Miranda the sentry put the light from a flashlight on it, showed it to the other sentry with him, then handed it back and saluted.

"Siga," he said. "Continue. But without lights."

The motorcycle roared again and Andrés was holding tight onto the forward seat and they were moving along the highway, Gomez riding carefully in the traffic. None of the trucks had lights and they were moving down the road in a long convoy. There were loaded trucks moving up the road too, and all of them raised a dust that Andrés could not see in that dark but could only feel as a cloud that blew in his face and that he could bite between his teeth.

They were close behind the tailboard of a truck now, the motorcycle chugging, then Gomez speeded up and passed it and another, and another, and another with the other trucks roaring and rolling down past them on the left. There was a motorcar behind them now and it blasted into the truck noise and the dust with its klaxon again and again; then flashed on lights that showed the dust like a solid yellow cloud and surged past them in a whining rise of gears and a demanding, threatening, bludgeoning of klaxoning.

Then ahead all the trucks were stopped and riding on, working

his way ahead past ambulances, staff cars, an armored car, another, and a third, all halted, like heavy, metal, gun-jutting turtles in the hot yet settled dust, they found another control where there had been a smash-up. A truck, halting, had not been seen by the truck which followed it and the following truck had run into it smashing the rear of the first truck in and scattering cases of small-arms ammunition over the load. One case had burst open on landing and as Gomez and Andrés stopped and wheeled the motorcycle forward through the stalled vehicles to show their safe-conduct at the control Andrés walked over the brass hulls of the thousand of cartridges scattered across the road in the dust. The second truck had its radiator completely smashed in. The truck behind it was touching its tail gate. A hundred more were piling up behind and an overbooted officer was running back along the road shouting to the drivers to back so that the smashed truck could be gotten off the road.

There were too many trucks for them to be able to back unless the officer reached the end of the ever mounting line and stopped it from increasing and Andrés saw him running, stumbling, with his flashlight, shouting and cursing and, in the dark, the trucks kept coming up.

The man at the control would not give the safe-conduct back. There were two of them, with rifles slung on their backs and flashlights in their hands and they were shouting too. The one carrying the safe-conduct in his hand crossed the road to a truck going in the c'ownhill direction to tell it to proceed to the next control and tell them there to hold all trucks until his jam was straightened out. The truck driver listened and went on. Then, still holding the safe-conduct, the control patrol came over, shouting, to the truck driver whose load was spilled.

"Leave it and get ahead for the love of God so we can clear this!" he shouted at the driver.

"My transmission is smashed," the driver, who was bent over by

the rear of his truck, said.

"Obscene your transmission. Go ahead, I say."

"They do not go ahead when the differential is smashed," the driver told him and bent down again.

"Get thyself pulled then, get ahead so that we can get this other obscenity off the road."

The driver looked at him sullenly as the control man shone the electric torch on the smashed rear of the truck. "Get ahead. Get ahead," the man shouted, still holding the safeconduct pass in his hand.

"And my paper," Gomez spoke to him. "My safe-conduct. We are in a hurry."

"Take thy safe-conduct to hell," the man said and handing it to him ran across the road to halt a down-coming truck.

"Turn thyself at the crossroads and put thyself in position to pull this wreck forward," he said to the driver.

"My orders are—"

"Obscenity thy orders. Do as I say."

The driver let his truck into gear and rolled straight ahead down the road and was gone in the dust.

As Gomez started the motorcycle ahead onto the now clear right-hand side of the road past the wrecked truck, Andrés, holding tight again, saw the control guard halting another truck and the driver leaning from the cab and listening to him.

Now they went fast, swooping along the road that mounted steadily toward the mountain. All forward traffic had been stalled at the control and there were only the descending trucks passing, passing and passing on their left as the motorcycle climbed fast and steadily now until it began to overtake the mounting traffic which had gone on ahead before the disaster at the control.

Still without lights they passed four more armored cars, then a long line of trucks loaded with troops. The troops were silent in the dark and at first Andrés only felt their presence rising above him,

bulking above the truck bodies through the dust as they passed. Then another staff came behind them blasting with its klaxon and flicking its lights off and on, and each time the lights shone Andrés saw the troops, steel-helmeted, their rifles vertical, their machine guns pointed up against the dark sky, etched sharp against the night that they dropped into when the light flicked off. Once as he passed close to a troop truck and the lights flashed he saw their faces fixed and sad in the sudden light. In their steel helmets, riding in the trucks in the dark toward something that they only knew was an attack, their faces were drawn with each man's own problem in the dark and the light revealed them as they would not have looked in day, from shame to show it to each other, until the bombardment and the attack would commence, and no man would think about his face. Andrés now passing them truck after truck, Gomez still keeping successfully ahead of the following staff car, did not think any of this about their faces. He only thought, "What an army. What equipment. What a mechanization. *Vaya gente!* Look at such people. Here we have the army of the Republic. Look at them.

Camion after camion. All uniformed alike. All with casques of steel on their heads. Look at the *máquina s* rising from the trucks against the coming of planes. Look at the army that has been builded!"

And as the motorcycle passed the high gray trucks full of troops, gray trucks with high square cabs and square ugly radiators, steadily mounting the road in the dust and the flicking lights of the pursuing staff car, the red star of the army showing in the light when it passed over the tail gates, showing when the light came onto the sides of the dusty truck bodies, as they passed, climbing steadily now, the air colder and the road starting to turn in bends and switchbacks now, the trucks laboring and grinding, some steaming in the light flashes, the motorcycle laboring now too, and Andrés clinging tight to the front seat as they climbed, Andrés thought this ride on a motorcycle was *mucho, mucho.* He had never

been on a motorcycle before and now they were climbing a mountain in the midst of all the movement that was going to an attack and, as they climbed, he knew now there was no problem of ever being back in time for the assault on the posts. In this movement and confusion he would be lucky to get back by the next night. He had never seen an offensive or any of the preparations for one before and as they rode up the road he marvelled at the size and power of this army that the Republic had built.

Now they rode on a long slanting, rising stretch of road that ran across the face of the mountain and the grade was so steep as they neared the top that Gomez told him to get down and together they pushed the motorcycle up the last steep grade of the pass. At the left, just past the top, there was a loop of road where cars could turn and there were lights winking in front of a big stone building that bulked long and dark against the night sky.

"Let us go to ask there where the headquarters is," Gomez said to Andrés and they wheeled the motorcycle over to where two sentries stood in front of the closed door of the great stone building. Gomez leaned the motorcycle against the wall as a motorcyclist in a leather suit, showing against the light from inside the building as the door opened, came out of the door with a dispatch case hung over his shoulder, a wooden-bolstered Mauser pistol swung against his hip. As the light went off, he found his motorcycle in the dark by the door, pushed it until it sputtered and caught, then roared off up the road.

At the door Gomez spoke to one of the sentries. "Captain Gomez of the Sixty-Fifth Brigade," he said. "Can you tell me where to find the headquarters of General Golz commanding the Thirty-Fifth Division?"

"It isn't here," the sentry said.

"What is here?"

"The Comandancia."

"What comandancia?"

“Well, the Comandancia.”

“The comandancia of what?”

“Who art thou to ask so many questions?” the sentry said to Gomez in the dark. Here on the top of the pass the sky was very clear with the stars out and Andrés, out of the dust now, could see quite clearly in the dark. Below them, where the road turned to the right, he could see clearly the outline of the trucks and cars that passed against the sky line.

“I am Captain Rogelio Gomez of the first battalion of the Sixty-Fifth Brigade and I ask where is the headquarters of General Golz,” Gomez said.

The sentry opened the door a little way. “Call the corporal of the guard,” he shouted inside.

Just then a big staff car came up over the turn of the road and circled toward the big stone building where Andrés and Gomez were standing waiting for the corporal of the guard. It came toward them and stopped outside the door.

A large man, old and heavy, in an oversized khaki beret, such as *chasseurs à pied* wear in the French Army, wearing an overcoat, carrying a map case and wearing a pistol strapped around his greatcoat, got out of the back of the car with two other men in the uniform of the International Brigades. He spoke in French, which Andrés did not understand and of which Gomez, who had been a barber, knew only a few words, to his chauffeur telling him to get the car away from the door and into shelter.

As he came into the door with the other two officers, Gomez saw his face clearly in the light and recognized him. He had seen him at political meetings and he had often read articles by him in *Mundo Obrero* translated from the French. He recognized his bushy eyebrows, his watery gray eyes, his chin and the double chin under it, and he knew him for one of France’s great modern revolutionary figures who had led the mutiny of the French Navy in the Black Sea. Gomez knew this man’s high political place in the International

Brigades and he knew this man would know where Golz's headquarters were and be able to direct him there. He did not know what this man had become with time, disappointment, bitterness both domestic and political, and thwarted ambition and that to question him was one of the most dangerous things that any man could do. Knowing nothing of this he stepped forward into the path of this man, saluted with his clenched fist and said, "Comrade Marty, we are the bearers of a dispatch for General Golz. Can you direct us to his headquarters? It is urgent."

The tall, heavy old man looked at Gomez with his outthrust head and considered him carefully with his watery eyes. Even here at the front in the light of a bare electric bulb, he having just come in from driving in an open car on a brisk night, his gray face had a look of decay. His face looked as though it were modelled from the waste material you find under the claws of a very old lion.

"You have what, Comrade?" he asked Gomez, speaking Spanish with a strong Catalan accent. His eyes glanced sideways at Andrés, slid over him, and went back to Gomez.

"A dispatch for General Golz to be delivered at his headquarters, Comrade Marty."

"Where is it from, Comrade?"

"From behind the fascist lines," Gomez said.

André Marty extended his hand for the dispatch and the other papers. He glanced at them and put them in his pocket.

"Arrest them both," he said to the corporal of the guard. "Have them searched and bring them to me when I send for them."

With the dispatch in his pocket he strode on into the interior of the big stone house.

Outside in the guard room Gomez and Andrés were being searched by the guard.

"What passes with that man?" Gomez said to one of the guards.

"Está loco," the guard said. "He is crazy."

"No. He is a political figure of great importance," Gomez said.

“He is the chief commissar of the International Brigades.”

“Apesar de eso, está loco,” the corporal of the guard said. “All the same he’s crazy. What do you behind the fascist lines?”

“This comrade is a guerilla from there,” Gomez told him while the man searched him. “He brings a dispatch to General Golz. Guard well my papers. Be careful with that money and that bullet on the string. It is from my first wound at Guadarama.”

“Don’t worry,” the corporal said. “Everything will be in this drawer. Why didn’t you ask me where Golz was?”

“We tried to. I asked the sentry and he called you.”

“But then came the crazy and you asked him. No one should ask him anything. He is crazy. Thy Golz is up the road three kilometers from here and to the right in the rocks of the forest.”

“Can you not let us go to him now?”

“Nay. It would be my head. I must take thee to the crazy. Besides, he has thy dispatch.”

“Can you not tell some one?”

“Yes,” the corporal said. “I will tell the first responsible one J see. All know that he is crazy.”

“I had always taken him for a great figure,” Gomez said. “For one of the glories of France.”

“He may be a glory and all,” the corporal said and put his hand on Andrés’s shoulder. “But he is crazy as a bedbug. He has a mania for shooting people.”

“Truly shooting them?”

“Como lo ayes,” the corporal said. “That old one kills more than the bubonic plague. *Mata más qué la peste bubonica.* But he doesn’t kill fascists like we do. *Qué va.* Not in joke. *Mata bichos raros.* He kills rare things. Trotzkyites. Divagationers. Any type of rare beasts.” Andrés did not understand any of this.

“When we were at Escorial we shot I don’t know how many for him,” the corporal said. “We always furnish the firing party. The men of the Brigades would not shoot their own men. Especially the

French. To avoid difficulties it is always us who do it. We shot French. We have shot Belgians. We have shot others of divers nationality. Of all types. *Tiene mania de fusitar gente.* Always for political things. He's crazy. *Purifica mas Qué el Saluarsán.* He purifies more than Salvarsan."

"But you will tell some one of this dispatch?"

"Yes, man. Surely. I know everyone of these two Brigades. Everyone comes through here. I know even up to and through the Russians, although only a few speak Spanish. We will keep this crazy from shooting Spaniards."

"But the dispatch."

"The dispatch, too. Do not worry, Comrade. We know how to deal with this crazy. He is only dangerous with his own people. We understand him now."

"Bring in the two prisoners," came the voice of André Marty.

"Quereis echar un trago?" the corporal asked. "Do you want a drink?"

"Why not?"

The corporal took a bottle of Anis from a cupboard and both Gomez and Andrés drank. So did the corporal. He wiped his mouth on his hand.

"Vámonos," he said.

They went out of the guard room with the swallowed burn of the Anis warming their mouths, their bellies and their hearts and walked down the hall and entered the room where Marty sat behind a long table, his map spread in front of him, his red-andblue pencil, with which he played at being a general officer, in his hand. To Andrés it was only one more thing. There had been many tonight. There were always many. If your papers were in order and your heart was good you were in no danger. Eventually they turned you loose and you were on your way. But the *Inglés* had said to hurry. He knew now he could never get back for the bridge but they had a dispatch to deliver and this old man there at the table had put it in

his pocket. “Stand there,” Marty said without looking up.

“Listen, Comrade Marty,” Gomez broke out, the Anis fortifying his anger. “Once tonight we have been impeded by the ignorance of the anarchists. Then by the sloth of a bureaucratic fascist. Now by the oversuspicion of a Communist.”

“Close your mouth,” Marty said without looking up. “This is not a meeting.”

“Comrade Marty, this is a matter of utmost urgence,” Gomez said. “Of the greatest importance.”

The corporal and the soldier with them were taking a lively interest in this as though they were at a play they had seen many times but whose excellent moments they could always savor.

“Everything is of urgence,” Marty said. “All things are of importance.” Now he looked up at them, holding the pencil. “How did you know Golz was here? Do you understand how serious it is to come asking for an individual general before an attack? How could you know such a general would be here?”

“Tell him, *tu,”* Gomez said to Andrés.

“Comrade General,” Andrés started—André Marty did not correct him in the mistake in rank—”I was given that packet on the other side of the lines—”

“On the other side of the lines?” Marty said. “Yes, I heard him say you came from the fascist lines.”

“It was given to me, Comrade General, by an *Inglés* named Roberto who had come to us as a dynamiter for this of the bridge. Understandeth?”

“Continue thy story,” Marty said to Andrés; using the term story as you would say lie, falsehood, or fabrication.

“Well, Comrade General, the *Inglés* told me to bring it to the General Golz with all speed. He makes an attack in these hills now on this day and all we ask is to take it to him now promptly if it pleases the Comrade General.”

Marty shook his head again. He was looking at Andrés but he

was not seeing him.

Golz, he thought in a mixture of horror and exultation as a man might feel hearing that a business enemy had been killed in a particularly nasty motor accident or that some one you hated but whose probity you had never doubted had been guilty of defalcation. That Golz should be one of them, too. That Golz should be in such obvious communication with the fascists. Golz that he had known for nearly twenty years. Golz who had captured the gold train that winter with Lucacz in Siberia. Golz who had fought against Kolchak, and in Poland. In the Caucasus. In China, and here since the first October. But he *had* been close to Tukachevsky. To Voroshilov, yes, too. But to Tukachevsky. And to who else? Here to Karkov, of course. And to Lucacz. But all the Hungarians had been intriguers. He hated Gall. Golz hated Gall. Remember that. Make a note of that. Golz has always hated Gall. But he favors Putz. Remember that. And Duval is his chief of staff. See what stems from that. You've heard him say Copic's a fool. That is definitive. That exists. And now this dispatch from the fascist lines. Only by pruning out of these rotten branches can the tree remain healthy and grow. The rot must become apparent for it is to be destroyed. But Golz of all men. That Golz should be one of the traitors. He knew that you could trust no one. No one. Ever. Not your wife. Not your brother. Not your oldest comrade. No one. Ever.

"Take them away," he said to the guards. "Guard them carefully." The corporal looked at the soldier. This had been very quiet for one of Marty's performances.

"Comrade Marty," Gomez said. "Do not be insane. Listen to me, a loyal officer and comrade. That is a dispatch that must be delivered. This comrade has brought it through the fascist lines to give to Comrade General Golz."

"Take them away," Marty said, now kindly, to the guard. He was sorry for them as human beings if it should be necessary to liquidate them. But it was the tragedy of Golz that oppressed him.

That it should be Golz, he thought. He would take the fascist communication at once to Varloff. No, better he would take it to Golz himself and watch him as he received it. That was what he would do. How could he be sure of Varloff if Golz was one of them? No. This was a thing to be very careful about.

Andrés turned to Gomez, "You mean he is not going to send the dispatch?" he asked, unbelieving.

"Don't you see?" Gomez said.

"Me cago en su puta madre!" Andrés said. *"Está loco."*

"Yes," Gomez said. "He is crazy. You are crazy! Hear! Crazy!" he shouted at Marty who was back now bending over the map with his red-and-blue pencil. "Hear me, you crazy murderer?"

"Take them away," Marty said to the guard. "Their minds are unhinged by their great guilt."

There was a phrase the corporal recognized. He had heard that before.

"You crazy murderer!" Gomez shouted.

"Hijo de la gran puta," Andrés said to him. *"Loco."*

The stupidity of this man angered him. If he was a crazy let him be removed as a crazy. Let the dispatch be taken from his pocket. God damn this crazy to hell. His heavy Spanish anger was rising out of his usual calm and good temper. In a little while it would blind him.

Marty, looking at his map, shook his head sadly as the guards took Gomez and Andrés out. The guards had enjoyed hearing him cursed but on the whole they had been disappointed in the performance. They had seen much better ones. André Marty did not mind the men cursing him. So many men had cursed him at the end. He was always genuinely sorry for them as human beings. He always told himself that and it was one of the last true ideas that was left to him that had ever been his own.

He sat there, his moustache and his eyes focused on the map, on the map that he never truly understood, on the brown tracing of the

contours that were traced fine and concentric as a spider's web. He could see the heights and the valleys from the contours but he never really understood why it should be this height and why this valley was the one. But at the General Staff where, because of the system of Political Commissars, he could intervene as the political head of the Brigades, he would put his finger on such and such a numbered, brown-thin-lined encircled spot among the greens of woods cut by the lines of roads that parallel the never casual winding of a river and say, "There. That is the point of weakness."

Gall and Copic, who were men of politics and of ambition, would agree and later, men who never saw the map, but heard the number of the hill before they left their starting place and had the earth of diggings on it pointed out, would climb its side to find their death along its slope or, being halted by machine guns placed in olive groves would never get up it at all. Or on other fronts they might scale it easily and be no better off than they had been before. But when Marty put his finger on the map in Golz's staff the scarheaded, white-faced General's jaw muscles would tighten and he would think, "I should shoot you, André Marty, before I let you put that gray rotten finger on a contour map of mine. Damn you to hell for all the men you've killed by interfering in matters you know nothing of. Damn the day they named tractor factories and villages and co-operatives for you so that you are a symbol that I cannot touch. Go and suspect and exhort and intervene and denounce and butcher some other place and leave my staff alone."

But instead of saying that Golz would only lean back away from the leaning bulk, the pushing finger, the watery gray eyes, the gray-white moustache and the bad breath and say, "Yes, Comrade Marty. I see your point. It is not well taken, however, and I do not agree. You can try to go over my head if you like. Yes. You can make it a Party matter as you say. But I do not agree."

So now André Marty sat working over his map at the bare table with the raw light on the unshaded electric light bulb over his head,

the overwide beret pulled forward to shade his eyes, referring to the mimeographed copy of the orders for the attack and slowly and laboriously working them out on the map as a young officer might work a problem at a staff college. He was engaged in war. In his mind he was commanding troops; he had the right to interfere arid this he believed to constitute command. So he sat there with Robert Jordan's dispatch to Golz in his pocket and Gomez and Andrés waited in the guard room and Robert Jordan lay in the woods above the bridge.

It is doubtful if the outcome of Andrés's mission would have been any different if he and Gomez had been allowed to proceed without André Marty's hindrance. There was no one at the front with sufficient authority to cancel the attack. The machinery had been in motion much too long for it to be stopped suddenly now. There is a great inertia about all military operations of any size. But once this inertia has been overcome and movement is under way they are almost as hard to arrest as to initiate.

But on this night the old man, his beret pulled forward, was still sitting at the table with his map when the door opened and Karkov the Russian journalist came in with two other Russians in civilian clothes, leather coats and caps. The corporal of the guard closed the door reluctantly behind them. Karkov had been the first responsible man he had been able to communicate with.

"Tovarich Marty," said Karkov in his politely disdainful lisping voice and smiled, showing his bad teeth.

Marty stood up. He did not like Karkov, but Karkov, coming from *Pravda* and in direct communication with Stalin, was at this moment one of the three most important men in Spain.

"Tovarich Karkov," he said.

"You are preparing the attack?" Karkov said insolently, nodding toward the map.

"I am studying it," Marty answered.

"Are you attacking? Or is it Golz?" Karkov asked smoothly.

"I am only a commissar, as you know," Marty told him.

"No," Karkov said. "You are modest. You are really a general. You have your map and your field glasses. But were you not an admiral once, Comrade Marty?"

"I was a gunner's mate," said Marty. It was a lie. He had really been a chief yeoman at the time of the mutiny. But he thought now, always, that he had been a gunner's mate.

"Ah. I thought you were a first-class yeoman," Karkov said. "I always get my facts wrong. It is the mark of the journalist."

The other Russians had taken no part in the conversation. They were both looking over Marty's shoulder at the map and occasionally making a remark to each other in their own language. Marty and Karkov spoke French after the first greeting.

"It is better not to get facts wrong in *Pravda,"* Marty said. He said it brusquely to build himself up again. Karkov always punctured him. The French word is *dégonjler* and Marty was worried and made wary by him. It was hard, when Karkov spoke, to remember with what importance he, André Marty, came from the Central Committee of the French Communist Party. It was hard to remember, too, that he was untouchable. Karkov seemed always to touch him so lightly and whenever he wished. Now Karkov said, "I usually correct them before I send them to *Pravda,* I am quite accurate in *Pravda.* Tell me, Comrade Marty, have you heard anything of any message coming through for Golz from one of our *partizan* group operating toward Segovia? There is an American comrade there named Jordan that we should have heard from. There have been reports of fighting there behind the fascist lines. He would have sent a message through to Golz."

"An American?" Marty asked. Andrés had said an *Inglés.* So that is what it was. So he had been mistaken. Why had those fools spoken to him anyway?"

"Yes," Karkov looked at him contemptuously, "a young American of slight political development but a great way with the

Spaniards and a fine *partizan* record. Just give me the dispatch, Comrade Marty. It has been delayed enough."

"What dispatch?" Marty asked. It was a very stupid thing to say and he knew it. But he was not able to admit he was wrong that quickly and he said it anyway to delay the moment of humiliation, not accepting any humiliation. "And the safe-conduct pass," Karkov said through his bad teeth.

André Marty put his hand in his pocket and laid the dispatch on the table. He looked Karkov squarely in the eye. All right. He was wrong and there was nothing he could do about it now but he was not accepting any humiliation. "And the safe-conduct pass," Karkov said softly.

Marty laid it beside the dispatch.

"Comrade Corporal," Karkov called in Spanish.

The corporal opened the door and came in. He looked quickly at André Marty, who stared back at him like an old boar which has been brought to bay by hounds. There was no fear on Marty's face and no humiliation. He was only angry, and he was only temporarily at bay. He knew these dogs could never hold him.

"Take these to the two comrades in the guard room and direct them to General Golz's headquarters," Karkov said. "There has been too much delay."

The corporal went out and Marty looked after him, then looked at Karkov.

"Tovarich Marty," Karkov said, "I am going to find out just how untouchable you are."

Marty looked straight at him and said nothing.

"Don't start to have any plans about the corporal, either," Karkov went on. "It was not the corporal. I saw the two men in the guard room and they spoke to me" (this was a lie). "I hope all men always will speak to me" (this was the truth although it was the corporal who had spoken). But Karkov had this belief in the good which could come from his own accessibility and the humanizing

possibility of benevolent intervention. It was the one thing he was never cynical about.

"You know when I am in the U.S.S.R. people write to me in *Pravda* when there is an injustice in a town in Azerbaijan. Did you know that? They say 'Karkov will help us.'"

André Marty looked at him with no expression on his face except anger and dislike. There was nothing in his mind now but that Karkov had done something against him. All right, Karkov, power and all, could watch out.

"This is something else," Karkov went on, "but it is the same principle. I am going to find out just how untouchable you are, Comrade Marty. I would like to know if it could not be possible to change the name of that tractor factory."

André Marty looked away from him and back to the map.

"What did young Jordan say?" Karkov asked him.

"I did not read it," André Marty said. *"Et main tenant fiche moi Lapaix,* Comrade Karkov."

"Good," said Karkov. "I leave you to your military labors."

He stepped out of the room and walked to the guard room. Andrés and Gomez were already gone and he stood there a moment looking up the road and at the mountain tops beyond that showed now in the first gray of daylight. We must get on up there, he thought. It will be soon, now.

Andrés and Gomez were on the motorcycle on the road again and it was getting light. Now Andrés, holding again to the back of the seat ahead of him as the motorcycle climbed turn after switchback turn in a faint gray mist that layover the top of the pass, felt the motorcycle speed under him, then skid and stop and they were standing by the motorcycle on a long, down-slope of road and in the woods, on their left, were tanks covered with pine branches. There were troops here all through the woods. Andrés saw men carrying the long poles of stretchers over their shoulders. Three staff cars were off the road to the right, in under the trees, with

branches laid against their sides and other pine branches over their tops.

Gomez wheeled the motorcycle up to one of them. He leaned it against a pine tree and spoke to the chauffeur who was sitting by the car, his back against a tree.

"I'll take you to him," the chauffeur said. "Put thy *mota* out of sight and cover it with these." He pointed to a pile of cut branches.

With the sun just starting to come through the high branches of the pine trees, Gomez and Andrés followed the chauffeur, whose name was Vicente, through the pines across the road and up the slope to the entrance of a dugout from the roof of which signal wires ran on up over the wooded slope. They stood outside while the chauffeur went in and Andrés admired the construction of the dugout which showed only as a hole in the hillside, with no dirt scattered about, but which he could see, from the entrance, was both deep and profound with men moving around in it freely with no need to duck their heads under the heavy timbered roof.

Vicente, the chauffeur, came out.

"He is up above where they are deploying for the attack," he said. "I gave it to his Chief of Staff. He signed for it. Here."

He handed Gomez the receipted envelope. Gomez gave it to Andrés, who looked at it and put it inside his shirt.

"What is the name of him who signed?" he asked.

"Duval," Vicente said.

"Good," said Andrés. "He was one of the three to whom I might give it."

"Should we wait for an answer?" Gomez asked Andrés.

"It might be best. Though where I will find the *Inglés* and the others after that of the bridge neither God knows."

"Come wait with me," Vicente said, "until the General returns. And I will get thee coffee. Thou must be hungry."

"And these tanks," Gomez said to him.

They were passing the branch-covered, mud-colored tanks, each

with two deep-ridged tracks over the pine needles showing where they had swung and backed from the road. Their 4S-mm. guns jutted horizontally under the branches and the drivers and gunners in their leather coats and ridged helmets sat with their backs against the trees or lay sleeping on the ground.

"These are the reserve," Vicente said. "Also these troops are in reserve. Those who commence the attack are above."

"They are many," Andrés said. "Yes," Vicente said. "It is a full division."

Inside the dugout Duval, holding the opened dispatch from Robert Jordan in his left hand, glancing at his wrist watch on the same hand, reading the dispatch for the fourth time, each time feeling the sweat come out from under his armpit and run down his flank, said into the telephone, "Get me position Segovia, then. He's left? Get me position Avila."

He kept on with the phone. It wasn't any good. He had talked to both brigades. Golz had been up to inspect the dispositions for the attack and was on his way to an observation post. He called the observation post and he was not there.

"Get me planes one," Duval said, suddenly taking all responsibility.

He would take responsibility for holding it up. It was better to hold it up. You could not send them to a surprise attack against an enemy that was waiting for it. You couldn't do it. It was just murder. You couldn't. You mustn't. No matter what. They could shoot him if they wanted. He would call the airfield directly and get the bombardment cancelled. But suppose it's just a holding attack? Suppose we were supposed to draw off all that material and those forces? Suppose that is what it is for? They never tell you it is a holding attack when you make it.

"Cancel the call to planes one," he told the signaller. "Get me the 69th Brigade observation post."

He was still calling there when he heard the first sound of the

planes.

It was just then he got through to the observation post.

"Yes," Golz said quietly.

He was sitting leaning back against the sandbag, his feet against a rock, a cigarette hung from his lower lip and he was looking up and over his shoulder while he was talking. He was seeing the expanding wedges of threes, silver and thundering in the sky that were coming over the far shoulder of the mountain where the first sun was striking. He watched them come shining and beautiful in the sun. He saw the twin circles of light where the sun shone on the propellers as they came.

"Yes," he said into the telephone, speaking in French because it was Duval on the wire. *"Nous sommes foutus. Oui. Comme toujours. Oui. C'est dommage. Oui.* It's a shame it came too late." His eyes, watching the planes coming, were very proud. He saw the red wing markings now and he watched their steady, stately roaring advance. This was how it could be. These were our planes. They had come, crated on ships, from the Black Sea through the Straits of Marmora, through the Dardanelles, through the Mediterranean and to l-ere, unloaded lovingly at Alicante, assembled ably, tested and found perfect and now flown in lovely hammering precision, the V's tight and pure as they came now high and silver in the morning sun to blast those ridges across there and blow them roaring high so that we can go through.

Golz knew that once they had passed overhead and on, the bombs would fall, looking like porpoises in the air as they tumbled. And then the ridge ;ops would spout and roar in jumping clouds and disappear in one great blowing cloud. Then the tanks would grind clanking up those two slopes and after them would go his two brigades. And if it had been a surprise they could go on and down and over and through, pausing, cleaning up, dealing with, much to do, much to be done intelligently with the tanks helping, with the tanks wheeling and returning, giving covering fire and others

bringing the attackers up then slipping on and over and through and pushing down beyond. This was how it would be if there was no treason and if all did what they should.

There were the two ridges, and there were the tanks ahead and there were his two good brigades ready to leave the woods and here came the planes now. Everything he had to do had been done as it should be.

But as he watched the planes, almost up to him now, he felt sick at his stomach for he knew from having heard Jordan's dispatch over the phone that there would be no one on those two ridges. They'd be withdrawn a little way below in narrow trenches to escape the fragments, or hiding in the timber and when the bombers passed they'd get back up there with their machine guns and their automatic weapons and the anti-tank guns Jordan had said went up the road, and it would be one famous balls up more. But the planes, now coming deafeningly, were how it could have been and Golz watching them, looking up, said into the telephone, "No. *Rien à faire. Rien. Faut pas penser. Faut accepter."*

Golz watched the planes with his hard proud eyes that knew how things could be and how they would be instead and said, proud of how they could be, believing in how they could be, even if they never were, *"Bon. Nous ferons notre petit possible,"* and hung up.

But Duval did not hear him. Sitting at the table holding the receiver, all he heard was the roar of the planes and he thought, now, maybe this time, listen to them come, maybe the bombers will blow them all off, maybe we will get a break-through, maybe he will get the reserves he asked for, maybe this is it, maybe this is the time. Go on. Come on. Go on. The roar was such that he could not hear what he was thinking.

Chapter Forty-Three

Robert Jordan lay behind the trunk of a pine tree on the slope of the hill above the road and the bridge and watched it become daylight. He loved this hour of the day always and now he watched it; feeling it gray within him, as though he were a part of the slow lightening that comes before the rising of the sun; when solid things darken and space lightens and the lights that have shone in the night go yellow and then fade as the day comes. The pine trunks below him were hard and clear now, their trunks solid and brown and the road was shiny with a wisp of mist over it. The dew had wet him and the forest floor was soft and he felt the give of the brown, dropped pine needles under his elbows. Below he saw, through the light mist that rose from the stream bed, the steel of the bridge, straight and rigid across the gap, with the wooden sentry boxes at each end. But as he looked the structure of the bridge was still spidery and fine in the mist that hung over the stream. He saw the sentry now in his box as he stood, his back with the hanging blanket coat topped by the steel casque on his head showing as he leaned forward over the hole-punched petrol tin of the brazier, warming his hands. Robert Jordan heard the stream, far down in the rocks, and he saw a faint, thin smoke that rose from the sentry box.

He looked at his watch and thought, I wonder if Andrés got through to Golz? If we are going to blow it I would like to breathe very slowly and slow up the time again and feel it. Do you think he made it? Andrés? And if he did would they call it off? If they had time to call it off? *Qué va.* Do not worry. They will or they won't.

There are no more decisions and in a little while you will know. Suppose the attack is successful. Golz said it could be. That there was a possibility. With our tanks coming down that road, the people coming through from the right and down and past La Granja and the whole left of the mountains turned. Why don't you ever think of how it is to win? You've been on the defensive for so long that you can't think of that. Sure. But that was before all that stuff went up this road. That was before all the planes came. Don't be so naive. But remember this that as long as we can hold them here we keep the fascists tied up. They can't attack any other country until they finish with us and they can never finish with us. If the French help at all, if only they leave the frontier open and if we get planes from America they can never finish with us. Never, if we get anything at all. These people will fight forever if they're well armed.

No you must not expect victory here, not for several years maybe. This is just a holding attack. You must not get illusions about it now. Suppose we got a break-through today? This is our first big attack. Keep your sense of proportion. But what if we should have it? Don't get excited, he told himself. Remember what went up the road. You've done what you could about that. We should have portable short-wave sets, though. We will, in time. But we haven't yet. You just watch now and do what you should.

Today is only one day in all the days that will ever be. But what will happen in all the other days that ever come can depend on what you do today. It's been that way all this year. It's been that way so many times. All of this war is that way. You are getting very pompous in the early morning, he told himself. Look there what's coming now.

He saw the two men in blanket capes and steel helmets come around the corner of the road walking toward the bridge, their rifles slung over their shoulders. One stopped at the far end of the bridge and was out of sight in the sentry box. The other came on across the bridge, walking slowly and heavily. He stopped on the

bridge and spat into the gorge, then came on slowly to the near end of the bridge where the other sentry spoke to him and then started off back over the bridge. The sentry who was relieved walked faster than the other had done (because he's going to coffee, Robert Jordan thought) but he too spat down into the gorge.

I wonder if that is superstition? Robert Jordan thought. I'll have to take me a spit in that gorge too. If I can spit by then. No. It can't be very powerful medicine. It can't work. I'll have to prove it doesn't work before I am out there.

The new sentry had gone inside the box and sat down. His rifle with the bayonet fixed was leaning against the wall. Robert Jordan took his glasses from his shirt pocket and turned the eyepieces until the end of the bridge showed sharp and gray-painted-metal clear. Then he moved them onto the sentry box.

The sentry sat leaning against the wall. His helmet hung on a peg and his face showed clearly. Robert Jordan saw he was the same man who had been there on guard two days before in the afternoon watch. He was wearing the same knitted stocking-cap. And he had not shaved. His cheeks were sunken and his cheekbones prominent. He had bushy eyebrows that grew together in the center. He looked sleepy and as Robert Jordan watched him he yawned. Then he took out a tobacco pouch and a packet of papers and rolled himself a cigarette. He tried to make a lighter work and finally put it in his pocket and went over to the brazier, leaned over, reached inside, brought up a piece of charcoal, juggled it in one hand while he blew on it, then lit the cigarette and tossed the lump of charcoal back into the brazier.

Robert Jordan, looking through the Zeiss 8-power glasses, watched his face as he leaned against the wall of the sentry box drawing on the cigarette. Then he took the glasses down, folded them together and put them in his pocket.

I won't look at him again, he told himself.

He lay there and watched the road and tried not to think at all.

A squirrel chittered from a pine tree below him and Robert Jordan watched the squirrel come down the tree trunk, stopping on his way down to turn his head and look toward where the man was watching. He saw the squirrel's eyes, small and bright, and watched his tail jerk in excitement. Then the squirrel crossed to another tree, moving on the ground in long, small-pawed, tail-exaggerated bounds. On the tree trunk he looked back at Robert Jordan, then pulled himself around the trunk and out of sight. Then Robert Jordan heard the squirrel chitter from a high branch of the pine tree and he watched him there, spread flat along the branch, his tail jerking.

Robert Jordan looked down through the pines to the sentry box again. He would like to have had the squirrel with him in his pocket. He would like to have had anything that he could touch. He rubbed his elbows against the pine needles but it was not the same. Nobody knows how lonely you can be when you do this. Me, though, I know. I hope that Rabbit will get out of this all right. Stop that now. Yes, sure. But I can hope that and I do. That I blow it well and that she gets out all right. Good. Sure. Just that. That is all I want now.

He lay there now and looked away from the road and the sentry box and across to the far mountain. Just do not think at all, he told himself. He lay there quietly and watched the morning come. It was a fine early summer morning and it came very fast now in the end of May. Once a motorcyclist in a leather coat and allleather helmet with an automatic rifle in a holster by his left leg came across the bridge and went on up the road. Once an ambulance crossed the bridge, passed below him, and went up the road. But that was all. He smelled the pines and he heard the stream and the bridge showed clear now and beautiful in the morning light. He lay there behind the pine tree, with the submachine gun across his left forearm, and he never looked at the sentry box again until, long after it seemed that it was never coming, that nothing could happen

on such a lovely late May morning, he heard the sudden, clustered, thudding of the bombs.

As he heard the bombs, the first thumping noise of them, before the echo of them came back in thunder from the mountain, Robert Jordan drew in a long breath and lifted the submachine gun from where it lay. His arm felt stiff from its weight and his fingers were heavy with reluctance.

The man in the sentry box stood up when he heard the bombs. Robert Jordan saw him reach for his rifle and step forward out of the box listening. He stood in the road with the sun shining on him. The knitted cap was on the side of his head and the sun was on his unshaved face as he looked up into the sky toward where the planes were bombing.

There was no mist on the road now and Robert Jordan saw the man, clearly and sharply, standing there on the road looking up at the sky. The sun shone bright on him through the trees.

Robert Jordan felt his own breath tight now as though a strand of wire bound his chest and, steadying his elbows, feeling the corrugations of the forward grip against his fingers, he put the oblong of the foresight, settled now in the notch of the rear, onto the center of the man's chest and squeezed the trigger gently. He felt the quick, liquid, spastic lurching of the gun against his shoulder and on the road the man, looking surprised and hurt, slid forward on his knees and his forehead doubled to the road. His rifle fell by him and lay there with one of the man's fingers twisted through the trigger guard, his wrist bent forward. The rifle lay, bayonet forward on the road. Robert Jordan looked away from the man lying with his head doubled under on the road to the bridge, and the sentry box at the other end. He could not see the other sentry and he looked down the slope to the right where he knew Agustín was hidden. Then he heard Anselmo shoot, the shot smashing an echo back from the gorge. Then he heard him shoot again.

With that second shot came the cracking boom of grenades from around the corner below the bridge. Then there was the noise of grenades from well up the road to the left. Then he heard rifle-firing up the road and from below came the noise of Pablo's cavalry automatic rifle spat-spat-spat-spatting into the noise of grenades. He saw Anselmo scrambling down the steep cut to the far end of the bridge and he slung the submachine gun over his shoulder and picked up the two heavy packs from behind the pine trunks and with one in each hand, the packs pulling his arms so that he felt the tendons would pull out of his shoulders, he ran lurching down the steep slope to the road.

As he ran he heard Agustín shouting, *"Buena, caza, Inglés. Buena caza!"* and he thought, "Nice hunting, like hell, nice hunting," and just then he heard Anselmo shoot at the far end of the bridge, the noise of the shot clanging in the steel girders. He passed the sentry where he lay and ran onto the bridge, the packs swmgmg.

The old man came running toward him, holding his carbine in one hand. *"Sin nouedad,"* he shouted. "There's nothing wrong. *Tuue Qué rematarlo.* I had to finish him."

Robert Jordan, kneeling, opening the packs in the center of the bridge taking out his material, saw that tears were running down Anselmo's cheeks through the gray beard stubble.

"Yo maté uno tambien," he said to Anselmo. "I killed one too," and jerked his head toward where the sentry lay hunched over in the road at the end of the bridge. "Yes, man, yes," Anselmo said. "We have to kill them and we kill them."

Robert Jordan was climbing down into the framework of the bridge. The girders were cold and wet with dew under his hands and he climbed carefully, feeling the sun on his back, bracing himself in a bridge truss, hearing the noise of the tumbling water below him, hearing firing, too much firing, up the road at the upper post. He was sweating heavily now and it was cool under the bridge. He had a coil of wire around one arm and a pair of pliers

hung by a thong from his wrist.

"Hand me that down a package at a time, *viejo,"* he called up to Anselmo. The old man leaned far over the edge handing down the oblong blocks of explosive and Robert Jordan reached up for them, shoved them in where he wanted them, packed them close, braced them, "Wedges, *viejo!* Give me wedges!" smelling the fresh shingle smell of the new whittled wedges as he tapped them in tight to hold the charge between the girders.

Now as he worked, placing, bracing, wedging, lashing tight with wire, thinking only of demolition, working fast and skillfully as a surgeon works, he heard a rattle of firing from below on the road. Then there was the noise of a grenade. Then another, booming through the rushing noise the water made. Then it was quiet from that direction.

"Damn," he thought. "I wonder what hit them then?"

There was still firing up the road at the upper post. Too damned much firing, and he was lashing two grenades side by side on top of the braced blocks of explosive, winding wire over their corrugations so they would hold tight and firm and lashing it tight; twisting it with the pliers. He felt of the whole thing and then, to make it more solid, tapped in a wedge above the grenades that blocked the whole charge firmly in against the steel.

"The other side now, *viejo,"* he shouted up to Anselmo and climbed across through the trestling, like a bloody Tarzan in a rolled steel forest, he thought, and then coming out from under the dark, the stream tumbling below him, he looked up and saw Anselmo's face as he reached the packages of explosive down to him. Goddamn good face, he thought. Not crying now. That's all to the good. And one side done. This side now and we're done. This will drop it like what all. Come on. Don't get excited. Do it. Clean and fast as the last one. Don't fumble with it. Take your time. Don't try to do it faster than you can. You can't lose now. Nobody can keep you from blowing one side now. You're doing it just the way

you should. This is a cool place. Christ, it feels cool as a wine cellar and there's no crap. Usually working under a stone bridge it's full of crap. This is a dream bridge. A bloody dream bridge. It's the old man on top who's in a bad spot. Don't try to do it faster than you can. I wish that shooting would be over up above. "Give me some wedges, *viejo."* I don't like that shooting still. Pilar has got in trouble there. Some of the post must have been out. Out back; or behind the mill. They're still shooting. That means there's somebody still at the mill. And all that damned sawdust. Those big piles of sawdust. Sawdust, when it's old and packed, is good stuff to fight behind. There must be several of them still. It's quiet below with Pablo. I wonder what that second flare-up was. It must have been a car or a motorcyclist. I hope to God they don't have any armored cars come up or any tanks. Go on. Put it in just as fast as you can and wedge it tight and lash it fast. You're shaking, like a Goddamn woman. What the hell is the matter with you? You're trying to do it too fast. I'll bet that Goddamn woman up above isn't shaking. That Pilar. Maybe she is too. She sounds as though she were in plenty trouble. She'll shake if she gets in enough. Like everybody bloody else.

He leaned out and up into the sunlight and as he reached his hand up to take what Anselmo handed him, his head now above the noise of the falling water, the firing increased sharply up the road and then the noise of grenades again. Then more grenades.

"They rushed the sawmill then."

It's lucky I've got this stuff in blocks, he thought. Instead of sticks. What the hell. It's just neater. Although a lousy canvas sack full of jelly would be quicker. Two sacks. No. One of that would do. And if we just had detonators and the old exploder. That son of a bitch threw my exploder in the river. That old box and the places that it's been. In this river he threw it. That bastard Pablo. He gave them hell there below just now. "Give me some more of that, *viejo."*

The old man's doing very well. He's in quite a place up there. He

hated to shoot that sentry. So did I but I didn't think about it. Nor do I think about it now. You have to do that. But then Anselmo got a cripple. I know about cripples. I think that killing a man with an automatic weapon makes it easier. I mean on the one doing it. It is different. After the first touch it is it that does it. Not you. Save that to go into some other time. You and your head. You have a nice thinking head old Jordan. Roll Jordan, Roll! They used to yell that at football when you lugged the ball. Do you know the damned Jordan is really not much bigger than that creek down there below. At the source, you mean. So is anything else at the source. This is a place here under this bridge. A home away from home. Come on Jordan, pull yourself together. This is serious Jordan. Don't you understand? Serious. It's less so all the time. Look at that other side. *Para qué?* I'm all right now however she goes. As Maine goes so goes the nation. As Jordan goes so go the bloody Israelites. The bridge, I mean. As Jordan goes, so goes the bloody bridge, other way around, really.

"Give me some more of that, Anselmo old boy," he said. The old man nodded. "Almost through," Robert Jordan said. The old man nodded again.

Finishing wiring the grenades down, he no longer heard the firing from up the road. Suddenly he was working only with the noise of the stream. He looked down and saw it boiling up white below him through the boulders and then dropping down to a clear pebbled pool where one of the wedges he had dropped swung around in the current. As he looked a trout rose for some insect and made a circle on the surface close to where the chip was turning. As he twisted the wire tight with the pliers that held these two grenades in place, he saw, through the metal of the bridge, the sunlight on the green slope of the mountain. It was brown three days ago, he thought.

Out from the cool dark under the bridge he leaned into the bright sun and shouted to Anselmo's bending face, "Give me the big

coil of wire."

The old man handed it down.

For God's sake don't loosen them any yet. This will pull them. I wish you could string them through. But with the length of wire you are using it's O.K., Robert Jordan thought as he felt the cotter pins that held the rings that would release the levers on the hand grenades. He checked that the grenades, lashed on their sides, had room for the levers to spring when the pins were pulled (the wire that lashed them ran through under the levers), then he attached a length of wire to one ring, wired it onto the main wire that ran to the ring of the outside grenade, paid off some slack from the coil and passed it around a steel brace and then handed the coil up to Anselmo. "Hold it carefully," he said.

He climbed up onto the bridge, took the coil from the old man and walked back as fast as he could payout wire toward where the sentry was slumped in the road, leaning over the side of the bridge and paying out wire from the coil as he walked.

"Bring the sacks," he shouted to Anselmo as he walked backwards. As he passed he stooped down and picked up the submachine gun and slung it over his shoulder again.

It was then, looking up from paying out wire, that he saw, well up the road, those who were coming back from the upper post.

There were four of them, he saw, and then he had to watch his wire so it would be clear and not foul against any of the outer work of the bridge. Eladio was not with them.

Robert Jordan carried the wire clear past the end of the bridge, took a loop around the last stanchion and then ran along the road until he stopped beside a stone marker. He cut the wire and handed it to Anselmo.

"Hold this, *viejo,"* he said. "Now walk back with me to the bridge. Take up on it as you walk. No. I will."

At the bridge he pulled the wire back out through the hitch so it now ran clear and unfouled to the grenade rings and handed it,

stretching alongside the bridge but running quite clear, to Anselmo.

"Take this back to that high stone," he said. "Hold it easily but firmly. Do not put any force on it. When thou pullest hard, hard, the bridge will blow. *Comprendes?"*

"Yes."

"Treat it softly but do not let it sag so it will foul. Keep it lightly firm but not pulling until thou pull est. *Comprendes?"*

"Yes."

"When thou pullest really pull. Do not jerk."

Robert Jordan while he spoke was looking up the road at the remainder of Pilar's band. They were close now and he saw Primi tivo and Rafael were supporting Fernando. He looked to be shot through the groin for he was holding himself there with both hands while the man and the boy held him on either side. His right leg was dragging, the side of the shoe scraping on the road as they walked him. Pilar was climbing the bank into the timber carrying three rifles. Robert Jordan could not see her face but her head was up and she was climbing as fast as she could.

"How does it go?" Primitivo called.

"Good. We're almost finished," Robert Jordan shouted back. There was no need to ask how it went with them. As he looked away the three were on the edge of the road and Fernando was shaking his head as they tried to get him up the bank.

"Give me a rifle here," Robert Jordan heard him say in a choky voice.

"No, *hombre.* We will get thee to the horses."

"What would I do with a horse?" Fernando said. "I am very well here."

Robert Jordan did not hear the rest for he was speaking to Anselmo.

"Blow it if tanks come," he said. "But only if they come onto it. Blow it if armored cars come. If they come onto it. Anything else Pablo will stop."

“I will not blow it with thee beneath it.”

“Take no account of me. Blow it if thou needest to. I fix the other wire and come back. Then we will blow it together.”

He started running for the center of the bridge.

Anselmo saw Robert Jordan run up the bridge, coil of wire over his arm, pliers hanging from one wrist and the submachine gun slung over his back. He saw him climb down under the rail of the bridge and out of sight. Anselmo held the wire in his hand, his right hand, and he crouched behind the stone marker and looked down the road and across the bridge. Halfway between him and the bridge was the sentry, who had settled now closer to the road, sinking closer onto the smooth road surface as the sun weighed on his back. His rifle, lying on the road, the bayonet fixed, pointed straight toward Anselmo. The old man looked past him along the surface of the bridge crossed by the shadows of the bridge rail to where the road swung to the left along the gorge and then turned out of sight be- hind the rocky wall. He looked at the far sentry box with the sun shining on it and then, conscious of the wire in his hand, he turned his head to where Fernando was speaking to Primitivo and the gypsy.

“Leave me here,” Fernando said. “It hurts much and there is much hemorrhage inside. I feel it in the inside when I move.”

“Let us get thee up the slope,” Primitivo said. “Put thy arms around our shoulders and we will take thy legs.”

“It is inutile,” Fernando said. “Put me here behind a stone. I am as useful here as above.”

“But when we go,” Primitivo said.

“Leave me here,” Fernando said. “There is no question of my travelling with this. Thus it gives one horse more. I am very well here. Certainly they will come soon.”

“We can take thee up the hill,” the gypsy said. “Easily.”

He was, naturally, in a deadly hurry to be gone, as was Prirnitivo. But they had brought him this far.

“Nay,” Fernando said. “I am very well here. What passes with Eladio?”

The gypsy put his finger on his head to show where the wound had been.

“Here,” he said. “After thee. When we made the rush.”

“Leave me,” Fernando said. Anselmo could see he was suffering much. He held both hands against his groin now and put his head back against the bank, his legs straight out before him. His face was gray and sweating.

“Leave me now please, for a favor,” he said. His eyes were shut with pain, the edges of the lips twitching. “I find myself very well here.”

“Here is a rifle and cartridges,” Primitivo said.

“Is it mine?” Fernando asked, his eyes shut.

“Nay, the Pilar has thine,” Primitivo said. “This is mine.”

“I would prefer my own,” Fernando said. “I am more accustomed to it.”

“I will bring it to thee,” the gypsy lied to him. “Keep this until it comes.”

“I am in a very good position here,” Fernando said. “Both for up the road and for the bridge.” He opened his eyes, turned his head and looked across the bridge, then shut them as the pain came.

The gypsy tapped his head and motioned with his thumb to Primitivo for them to be off.

“Then we will be down for thee,” Primitivo said and started up the slope after the gypsy, who was climbing fast.

Fernando lay back against the bank. In front of him was one of the whitewashed stones that marked the edge of the road. His head was in the shadow but the sun shone on his plugged and bandaged wound and on his hands that were cupped over it. His legs and his feet also were in the sun. The rifle lay beside him and there were three clips of cartridges shining in the sun beside the rifle. A fly crawled on his hands but the small tickling did not come through

the pain.

"Fernando!" Anselmo called to him from where he crouched, holding the wire. He had made a loop in the end of the wire and twisted it close so he could hold it in his fist.

"Fernando!" he called again.

Fernando opened his eyes and looked at him.

"How does it go?" Fernando asked.

"Very good," Anselmo said. "Now in a minute we will be blowing it."

"I am pleased. Anything you need me for advise me," Fernando said and shut his eyes again and the pain lurched in him.

Anselmo looked away from him and out onto the bridge.

He was watching for the first sight of the coil of wire being handed up onto the bridge and for the *Inglés's* sunburnt head and face to follow it as he would pull himself up the side. At the same time he was watching beyond the bridge for anything to come around the far corner of the road. He did not feel afraid now at all and he had not been afraid all the day. It goes so fast and it is so normal, he thought. I hated the shooting of the guard and it made me an emotion but that is passed now. How could the *Inglés* say that the shooting of a man is like the shooting of an animal? In all hunting I have had an elation and no feeling of wrong. But to shoot a man gives a feeling as though one had struck one's own brother when you are grown men. And to shoot him various times to kill him. Nay, do not think of that. That gave thee too much emotion and thee ran blubbering down the bridge like a woman.

That is over, he told himself, and thou canst try to atone for it as for the others. But now thou has what thou asked for last night coming home across the hills. Thou art in battle and thou hast no problem. If I die on this morning now it is all right.

Then he looked at Fernando lying there against the bank with his hands cupped over the groove of his hip, his lips blue, his eyes tight shut, breathing heavily and slowly, and he thought, If I die

may it be quickly. Nay I said I would ask nothing more if I were granted what I needed for today. So I will not ask. Understand? I ask nothing. Nothing in any way. Give me what I asked for and I leave all the rest according to discretion.

He listened to the noise that came, far away, of the battle at the pass and he said to himself, Truly this is a great day. I should realize and know what a day this is.

But there was no lift or any excitement in his heart. That was all gone and there was nothing but a calmness. And now, as he crouched behind the marker stone with the looped wire in his hand and another loop of it around his wrist and the gravel beside the road under his knees he was not lonely nor did he feel in any way alone. He was one with the wire in his hand and one with the bridge, and one with the charges the *Inglés* had placed. He was one with the *Inglés* still working under the bridge and he was one with all of the battle and with the Republic.

But there was no excitement. It was all calm now and the sun beat down on his neck and on his shoulders as he crouched and as he looked up he saw the high, cloudless sky and the slope of the mountain rising beyond the river and he was not happy but he was neither lonely nor afraid.

Up the hill slope Pilar lay behind a tree watching the road that came down from the pass. She had three loaded rifles by her and she handed one to Primitivo as he dropped down beside her.

“Get down there,” she said. “Behind that tree. Thou, gypsy, over there,” she pointed to another tree below. “Is he dead?”

“Nay. Not yet,” Primitivo said.

“It was bad luck,” Pilar said. “If we had had two more it need not have happened. He should have crawled around the sawdust pile. Is he all right there where he is?”

Primitivo shook his head.

“When the *Inglés* blows the bridge will fragments come this far?” the gypsy asked from behind his tree. “I don’t know,” Pilar said.

“But Agustín with the *máquina* is closer than thee. The *Inglés* would not have placed him there if it were too close.”

“But I remember with the blowing of the train the lamp of the engine blew by over my head and pieces of steel flew by like swallows.”

“Thou hast poetic memories,” Pilar said. “Like swallows. *Joder!* They were like wash boilers. Listen, gypsy, thou hast comported thyself well today. Now do not let thy fear catch up with thee.”

“Well, I only asked if it would blow this far so I might keep well behind the tree trunk,” the gypsy said.

“Keep it thus,” Pilar told him. “How many have we killed?”

“Pues five for us. Two here. Canst thou not see the other at the far end? Look there toward the bridge. See the box? Look! Dost see?” He pointed. “Then there were eight below for Pablo. I watched that post for the *Inglés.”*

Pilar grunted. Then she said violently and raging, “What passes with that *Inglés?* What is he obscenitying off under that bridge. *Vaya mandanga!* Is he building a bridge or blowing one?”

She raised her head and looked down at Anselmo crouched behind the stone marker.

“Hey, *viejo!”* she shouted. “What passes with thy obscenity of an *Inglés?”*

“Patience, woman,” Anselmo called up, holding the wire lightly but firmly. “He is terminating his work.”

“But what in the name of the great whore does he take so much time about?”

“Es muy concíenzudo!” Anselmo shouted. “It is a scientific labor.”

“I obscenity in the milk of science,” Pilar raged to the gypsy. “Let the filth-faced obscenity blow it and be done. Maria!” she shouted in her deep voice up the hill. “Thy *Inglés—”* and she shouted a flood of obscenity about Jordan’s imaginary actions under the bridge.

“Calm yourself, woman,” Anselmo called from the road. “He is

doing an enormous work. He is finishing it now."

"The hell with it," Pilar raged. "It is speed that counts."

Just then they all heard firing start down the road where Pablo was holding the post he had taken. Pilar stopped cursing and listened. "Ay," she said. "Ayee. Ayee. That's it." Robert Jordan heard it as he swung the coil of wire up onto the bridge with one hand and then pulled himself up after it. As his knees rested on the edge of the iron of the bridge and his hands were on the surface he heard the machine gun firing around the bend below. It was a different sound from Pablo's automatic rifle. He got to his feet, leaned over, passed his coil of wire clear and commenced to payout wire as he walked backwards and sideways along the bridge.

He heard the firing and as he walked he felt it in the pit of his stomach as though it echoed on his own diaphragm. It was closer now as he walked and he looked back at the bend of the road. But it was still clear of any car, or tank or men. It was still clear when he was halfway to the end of the bridge. It was still clear when he was three quarters of the way, his wire running clear and unfouled, and it was still clear as he climbed around behind the sentry box, holding his wire out to keep it from catching on the iron work. Then he was on the road and it was still clear below on the road and then he was moving fast backwards up the little washed-out gully by the lower side of the road as an outfielder goes backwards for a long fly ball, keeping the wire taut, and now he was almost opposite Anselmo's stone and it was still clear below the bridge.

Then he heard the truck coming down the road and he saw it over his shoulder just coming onto the long slope and he swung his wrist once around the wire and yelled to Anselmo, "Blow her!" and he dug his heels in and leaned back hard onto the tension of the wire with a turn of it around his wrist and the noise of the truck was coming behind and ahead there was the road with the dead sentry and the long bridge and the stretch of road below, still clear and then there was a cracking roar and the middle of the bridge

rose up in the air like a wave breaking and he felt the blast from the explosion roll back against him as he dove on his face in the pebbly gully with his hands holding tight over his head. His face was down against the pebbles as the bridge settled where it had risen and the familiar yellow smell of it rolled over him in acrid smoke and then it commenced to rain pieces of steel.

After the steel stopped falling he was still alive and he raised his head and looked across the bridge. The center section of it was gone. There were jagged pieces of steel on the bridge with their bright, new torn edges and ends and these were all over the road. The truck had stopped up the road about a hundred yards. The driver and the two men who had been with him were running toward a culvert.

Fernando was still lying against the bank and he was still breathing. His arms straight by his sides, his hands relaxed.

Anselmo lay face down behind the white marking stone. His left arm was doubled under his head and his right arm was stretched straight out. The loop of wire was still around his right fist. Robert Jordan got to his feet, crossed the road, knelt by him and made sure that he was dead. He did not turn him over to see what the piece of steel had done. He was dead and that was all.

He looked very small, dead, Robert Jordan thought. He looked small and gray-headed and Robert Jordan thought, I wonder how he ever carried such big loads if that is the size he really was. Then he saw the shape of the calves and the thighs in the tight, gray herdsman's breeches and the worn soles of the rope-soled shoes and he picked up Anselmo's carbine and the two sacks, practically empty now and went over and picked up the rifle that lay beside Fernando. He kicked a jagged piece of steel off the surface of the road. Then he swung the two rifles over his shoulder, holding them by the muzzles, and started up the slope into the timber. He did not look back nor did he even look across the bridge at the road. They were still firing around the bend below but he cared nothing about

that now.

He was coughing from the TNT fumes and he felt numb all through himself.

He put one of the rifles down by Pilar where she lay behind the tree. She looked and saw that made three rifles that she had again.

"You are too high up here," he said. "There's a truck up the road where you can't see it. They thought it was planes. You better get further down. I'm going down with Agustín to cover Pablo."

"The old one?" she asked him, looking at his face.

"Dead."

He coughed again, wrackingly, and spat on the ground.

"Thy bridge is blown, *Inglés,"* Pilar looked at him. "Don't forget that."

"I don't forget anything," he said. "You have a big voice," he said to Pilar. "I have heard thee bellow. Shout up to the Maria and tell her that I am all right." "We lost two at the sawmill," Pilar said, trying to make him understand.

"So I saw," Robert Jordan said. "Did you do something stupid?"

"Go and obscenity thyself, *Inglés,"* Pilar said. "Fernando and Eladio were men, too."

"Why don't you go up with the horses?" Robert Jordan said. "I can cover here better than thee."

"Thou art to cover Pablo."

"The hell with Pablo. Let him cover himself with *mierda."*

"Nay, *Inglés.* He came back. He has fought much below there. Thou hast not listened? He is fighting now. Against something bad. Do you not hear?"

"I'll cover him. But obscenity all of you. Thou and Pablo both."

"Inglés," Pilar said. "Calm thyself. I have been with thee in this as no one could be. Pablo did thee a wrong but he returned."

"If I had had the exploder the old man would not have been killed. I could have blown it from here."

"If, if, if—" Pilar said.

The anger and the emptiness and the hate that had come with the let-down after the bridge, when he had looked up from where he had lain and crouching, seen Anselmo dead, were still all through him. In him, too, was despair from the sorrow that soldiers turn to hatred in order that they may continue to be soldiers. Now it was over he was lonely, detached and unelated and he hated everyone he saw.

"If there had been no snow—" Pilar said. And then, not suddenly, as a physical release could have been (if the woman would have put her arm around him, say) but slowly and from his head he began to accept it and let the hate go out. Sure, the snow. That had done it. The snow. Done it to others. Once you saw it again as it was to others, once you got rid of your own self, the always ridding of self that you had to do in war. Where there could be no self. Where yourself is only to be lost. Then, from his losing of it, he heard Pilar say, "Sordo—"

"What?" he said.

"Sordo—"

"Yes," Robert Jordan said. He grinned at her, a cracked, stiff, tootightened- facial-tendoned grin. "Forget it. I was wrong. I am sorry, woman. Let us do this well and all together. And the bridge *is* blown, as thou sayest." "Yes. Thou must think of things in their place."

"Then I go now to Agustín. Put thy gypsy much farther down so that he can see well up the road. Give those guns to Primitivo and take this *máquina* . Let me show thee."

"Keep the *máquina ,"* Pilar said. "We will not be here any time. Pablo should come now and we will be going."

"Rafael," Robert Jordan said, "come down here with me. Here. Good. See those coming out of the culvert. There, above the truck? Coming toward the truck? Hit me one of those. Sit. Take it easy."

The gypsy aimed carefully and fired and as he jerked the bolt back and ejected the shell Robert Jordan said, "Over. You threw

against the rock above. See the rock dust? Lower, by two feet. Now, careful. They're running. Good. *Sigue tirando."*

"I got one," the gypsy said. The man was down in the road halfway between the culvert and the truck. The other two did not stop to drag him. They ran for the culvert and ducked in.

"Don't shoot at him," Robert Jordan said. "Shoot for the top part of a front tire on the truck. So if you miss you'll hit the engine. Good." He watched with the glasses. "A little lower. Good. You shoot like hell. *Mucha! Mucha!* Shoot me the top of the radiator. Anywhere on the radiator. Thou art a champion. Look. Don't let anything come past that point there. See?"

"Watch me break the windshield in the truck," the gypsy said happily.

"Nay. The truck is already sick," Robert Jordan said. "Hold thy fire until anything comes down the road. Start firing when it is opposite the culvert. Try to hit the driver. That you all should fire, then," he spoke to Pilar who had come farther down the slope with Primitivo. "You are wonderfully placed here. See how that steepness guards thy flank?"

"That you should get about thy business with Agustín," Pilar said. "Desist from thy lecture. 1 have seen terrain in my time."

"Put Primitivo farther up there," Robert Jordan said. "There. See, man? This side of where the bank steepens."

"Leave me," said Pilar. "Get along, *Inglés.* Thou and thy perfection. Here there is no problem."

Just then they heard the planes.

Maria had been with the horses for a long time, but they were no comfort to her. Nor was she any to them. From where she was in the forest she could not see the road nor could she see the bridge and when the firing started she put her arm around the neck of the big white-faced bay stallion that she had gentled and brought gifts

to many times when the horses had been in the corral in the trees below the camp. But her nervousness made the big stallion nervous, too, and he jerked his head, his nostrils widening at the firing and the noise of the bombs. Maria could not keep still and she walked around patting and gentling the horses and making them all more nervous and agitated.

She tried to think of the firing not as just a terrible thing that was happening, but to realize that it was Pablo below with the new men, and Pilar with the others above, and that she must not worry nor get into a panic but must have confidence in Roberto. But she could not do this and all the firing above and below the bridge and the distant sound of the battle that rolled down from the pass like the noise of a far-off storm with a dried, rolling rattle in it and the irregular beat of the bombs was simply a horrible thing that almost kept her from breathing.

Then later she heard Pilar's big voice from away below on the hillside shouting up some obscenity to her that she could not understand and she thought, Oh, God no, no. Don't talk like that with him in peril. Don't offend anyone and make useless risks. Don't give any provocation.

Then she commenced to pray for Roberto quickly and automatically as she had done at school, saying the prayers as fast as she could and counting them on the fingers of her left hand, praying by tens of each of the two prayers she was repeating. Then the bridge blew and one horse snapped his halter when he rose and jerked his head at the cracking roar and he went off through the trees. Maria caught him finally and brought him back, shivering, trembling, his chest dark with sweat, the saddle down, and coming back through the trees she heard shooting below and she thought I cannot stand this longer. 1 cannot live not knowing any longer. 1 cannot breathe and my mouth is so dry. And I am afraid and I am no good and 1 frighten the horses and only caught this horse by hazard because he knocked the saddle down against a tree and

caught himself kicking into the stirrups and now as I get the saddle up, Oh, God, I do not know. 1 cannot bear it. Oh please have him be all right for all my heart and all of me is at the bridge. The Republic is one thing and we must win is another thing. But, Oh, Sweet Blessed Virgin, bring him back to me from the bridge and I will do anything thou sayest ever. Because I am not here. There isn't any me. I am only with him. Take care of him for me and that will be me and then I will do the things for thee and he will not mind. Nor will it be against the Republic. Oh, please forgive me for I am very confused. I am too confused now. But if thou takest care of him I will do whatever is right. I will do what he says and what you say. With the two of me I will do it. But this now not knowing I cannot endure.

Then, the horse tied again, she with the saddle up now, the blanket smoothed, hauling tight on the cinch she heard the big, deep voice from the timber below, "Maria! Maria! Thy *Inglés* is all right. Hear me? All right. *Sin Nooedad!"*

Maria held the saddle with both hands and pressed her cropped head hard against it and cried. She heard the deep voice shouting again and she turned from the saddle and shouted, choking, "Yes! Thank you!" Then, choking again, "Thank you! Thank you very much!"

When they heard the planes they all looked up and the planes were coming from Segovia very high in the sky, silvery in the high sky, their drumming rising over all the other sounds.

"Those!" Pilar said. "There has only lacked those!"

Robert Jordan put his arm on her shoulders as he watched them. "Nay, woman," he said. "Those do not come for us. Those have no time for us. Calm thyself."

"I hate them."

"Me too. But now I must go to Agustín."

He circled the hillside through the pines and all the time there was the throbbing, drumming of the planes and across the shattered bridge on the road below, around the bend of the road there was the intermittent hammering fire of a heavy machine gun.

Robert Jordan dropped down to where Agustín lay in the clump of scrub pines behind the automatic rifle and more planes were coming all the time.

"What passes below?" Agustín said. "What is Pablo doing? Doesn't he know the bridge is gone?" "Maybe he can't leave."

"Then let us leave. The hell with him."

"He will come now if he is able," Robert Jordan said. "We should see him now."

"I have not heard him," Agustín said. "Not for five minutes. No. There! Listen! There he is. That's him."

There was a burst of the spot-spot-spotting fire of the cavalry submachine gun, then another, then another.

"That's the bastard," Robert Jordan said.

He watched still more planes coming over in the high cloudless blue sky and he watched Agustín's face as he looked up at them. Then he looked down at the shattered bridge and across to the stretch of road which still was clear. He coughed and spat and listened to the heavy machine gun hammer again below the bend. It sounded to be in the same place that it was before.

"And what's that?" Agustín asked. "What the unnameable is that?"

"It has been going since before I blew the bridge," Robert Jordan said. He looked down at the bridge now and he could see the stream through the torn gap where the center had fallen, hanging like a bent steel apron. He heard the first of the planes that had gone over now bombing up above at the pass and more were still coming. The noise of their motors filled all the high sky and looking up he saw their pursuit, minute and tiny, circling and wheeling high above them.

“I don’t think they ever crossed the lines the other morning, Primitivo said. “They must have swung off to the west and then come back. They could not be making an attack if they had seen these.”

“Most of these are new,” Robert Jordan said.

He had the feeling of something that had started normally and had then brought great, outsized, giant repercussions. It was as though you had thrown a stone and the stone made a ripple and the ripple returned roaring and toppling as a tidal wave. Or as though you shouted and the echo came back in rolls and peals of thunder, and the thunder was deadly. Or as though you struck one man and he fell and as far as you could see other men rose up all armed and armored. He was glad he was not with Golz up at the pass.

Lying there, by Agustín, watching the planes going over, listening for firing behind him, watching the road below where he knew he would see something but not what it would be, he still felt numb with the surprise that he had not been killed at the bridge. He had accepted being killed so completely that all of this now seemed unreal. Shake out of that, he said to himself. Get rid of that. There is much, much, much to be done today. But it would not leave him and he felt, consciously, all of this becoming like a dream.

“You swallowed too much of that smoke,” he told himself. But he knew it was not that. He could feel, solidly, how unreal it all was through the absolute reality and he looked down at the bridge and then back to the sentry lying on the road, to where Anselmo lay, to Fernando against the bank and back up the smooth, brown road to the stalled truck and still it was unreal.

“You better sell out your part of you quickly,” he told himself. “You’re like one of those cocks in the pit where nobody has seen the wound given and it doesn’t show and he is already going cold with it.”

“Nuts,” he said to himself. “You are a little groggy is all, and you have a let-down after responsibility, is all. Take it easy.”

Then Agustín grabbed his arm and pointed and he looked across the gorge and saw Pablo.

They saw Pablo come running around the corner of the bend in the road. At the sheer rock where the road went out of sight they saw him stop and lean against the rock and fire back up the road. Robert Jordan saw Pablo, short, heavy and stocky, his cap gone, leaning against the rock wall and firing the short cavalry automatic rifle and he could see the bright flicker of the cascading brass hulls as the sun caught them. They saw Pablo crouch and fire another burst. Then, without looking back, he came running, short, bowlegged, fast, his head bent down straight toward the bridge.

Robert Jordan had pushed Agustín over and he had the stock of the big automatic rifle against his shoulder and was sighting on the bend of the road. His own submachine gun lay by his left hand. It was not accurate enough for that range.

As Pablo came toward them Robert Jordan sighted on the bend but nothing came. Pablo had reached the bridge, looked over his shoulder once, glanced at the bridge, and then turned to his left and gone down into the gorge and out of sight. Robert Jordan was still watching the bend and nothing had come in sight. Agustín got up on one knee. He could see Pablo climbing down into the gorge like a goat. There had been no noise of firing below since they had first seen Pablo.

"You see anything up above? On the rocks above?" Robert Jordan asked.

"Nothing."

Robert Jordan watched the bend of the road. He knew the wall just below that was too steep for anyone to climb but below it eased and some one might have circled up above.

If things had been unreal before, they were suddenly real enough now. It was as though a reflex lens camera had been suddenly brought into focus. It was then he saw the low-bodied, angled snout and squat green, gray and brown-splashed turret with

the projecting machine gun come around the bend into the bright sun. He fired on it and he could hear the spang against the steel. The little whippet tank scuttled back behind the rock wall. Watching the corner, Robert Jordan saw the nose just reappear, then the edge of the turret showed and the turret swung so that the gun was pointing down the road.

"It seems like a mouse coming out of his hole," Agustín said. "Look, *Inglés."*

"He has little confidence," Robert Jordan said.

"This is the big insect Pablo has been fighting," Agustín said.

"Hit him again, *Inglés. "*

"Nay. I cannot hurt him. I don't want him to see where we are."

The tank commenced to fire down the road. The bullets hit the road surface and sung off and now they were pinging and clanging in the iron of the bridge. It was the same machine gun they had heard below.

"Cabrón!" Agustín said. "Is that the famous tanks, *Inglés?"*

"That's a baby one."

Cabrón. If I had a baby bottle full of gasoline I would climb up there and set fire to him. What will he do, *Inglés?"*

"After a while he will have another look."

"And these are what men fear," Agustín said. "Look, *Inglés!* He's rekilling the sentries."

"Since he has no other target," Robert Jordan said. "Do not reproach him." But he was thinking, Sure, make fun of him. But suppose it was you, way back here in your own country and they held you up with firing on the main road. Then a bridge was blown. Wouldn't you think it was mined ahead or that there was a trap? Sure you would. He's done all right. He's waiting for something else to come up. He's engaging the enemy. It's only us. But he can't tell that. Look at the little bastard.

The little tank had nosed a little farther around the corner.

Just then Agustín saw Pablo coming over the edge of the gorge,

pulling himself over on hands and knees, his bristly face running with sweat.

"Here comes the son of a bitch," he said.

"Who?"

"Pablo."

Robert Jordan looked, saw Pablo, and then he commenced firing at the part of the camouflaged turret of the tank where he knew the slit above the machine gun would be. The little tank whirred backwards, scuttling out of sight and Robert Jordan picked up the automatic rifle, clamped the tripod against the barrel and swung the gun with its still hot muzzle over his shoulder. The muzzle was so hot it burned his shoulder and he shoved it far behind him turning the stock flat in his hand.

"Bring the sack of pans and my little *máquina ,* H he shouted, "and come running."

Robert Jordan ran up the hill through the pines. Agustín was close behind him and behind him Pablo was coming.

"Pilar!" Jordan shouted across the hill. "Come on, woman!"

The three of them were going as fast as they could up the steep slope. They could not run any more because the grade was too severe and Pablo, who had no load but the light cavalry submachine gun, had closed up with the other two.

"And thy people?" Agustín said to Pablo out of his dry mouth.

"All dead," Pablo said. He was almost unable to breathe. Agustín turned his head and looked at him.

"We have plenty of horses now, *Inglés,* H Pablo panted.

"Good," Robert Jordan said. The murderous bastard, he thought. "What did you encounter?"

"Everything," Pablo said. He was breathing in lunges. "What passed with Pilar?" "She lost Fernando and the brother—"

"Eladio," Agustín said.

"And thou?" Pablo asked.

"I lost Anselmo."

"There are lots of horses," Pablo said. "Even for the baggage."

Agustín bit his lip, looked at Robert Jordan and shook his head. Below them, out of sight through the trees, they heard the tank firing on the road and bridge again.

Robert Jordan jerked his head. "What passed with that?" he said to Pablo. He did not like to look at Pablo, nor to smell him, but he wanted to hear him.

"I could not leave with that there," Pablo said. "We were barricaded at the lower bend of the post. Finally it went back to look for something and I came."

"What were you shooting at, at the bend?" Agustín asked bluntly.

Pablo looked at him, started to grin, thought better of it, and said nothing.

"Did you shoot them all?" Agustín asked. Robert Jordan was thinking, keep your mouth shut. It is none of your business now. They have done all that you could expect and more. This is an inter-tribal matter. Don't make moral judgments. What do you expect from a murderer? You're working with a murderer. Keep your mouth shut. You knew enough about him before. This is nothing new. But you dirty bastard, he thought. You dirty, rotten bastard.

His chest was aching with climbing as though it would split after the running and ahead now through the trees he saw the horses.

"Go ahead," Agustín was saying. "Why do you not say you shot them?"

"Shut up," Pablo said. "I have fought much today and well. Ask the *Inglés."*

"And now get us through today," Robert Jordan said. "For it is thee who has the plan for this."

"I have a good plan," Pablo said. "With a little luck we will be all right."

He was beginning to breathe better.

"You're not going to kill any of us, are you?" Agustín said. "For I

will kill thee now." "Shut up," Pablo said. "I have to look after thy interest and that of the band. This is war. One cannot do what one would wish."

"Cabrón," said Agustín. "You take all the prizes."

"Tell me what thou encountered below," Robert Jordan said to Pablo.

"Everything," Pablo repeated. He was still breathing as though it were tearing his chest but he could talk steadily now and his face and head were running with sweat and his shoulders and chest were soaked with it. He looked at Robert Jordan cautiously to see if he were really friendly and then he grinned. "Everything," he said again. "First we took the post. Then came a motorcyclist. Then another. Then an ambulance. Then a camion. Then the tank. Just before thou didst the bridge."

"Then—"

"The tank could not hurt us but we could not leave for it commanded the road. Then it went away and I came."

"And thy people?" Agustín put in, still looking for trouble.

"Shut up," Pablo looked at him squarely, and his face was the face of a man who had fought well before any other thing had happened. "They were not of our band."

Now they could see the horses tied to the trees, the sun coming down on them through the pine branches and them tossing their heads and kicking against the botflies and Robert Jordan saw Maria and the next thing he was holding her tight, tight, with the automatic rifle leaning against his side, the flash-cone pressing against his ribs and Maria saying, "Thou, Roberto. Oh, thou."

"Yes, rabbit. My good, good rabbit. Now we go."

"Art thou here truly?"

"Yes. Yes. Truly. Oh, thou!"

He had never thought that you could know that there was a woman if there was battle; nor that any part of you could know it, or respond to it; nor that if there was a woman that she should have

breasts small, round and tight against you through a shirt; nor that they, the breasts, could know about the two of them in battle. But it was true and he thought, good. That's good. I would not have believed that and he held her to him once hard, hard, but he did not look at her, and then he slapped her where he never had slapped her and said, "Mount. Mount. Get on that saddle, *guapa."* Then they were untying the halters and Robert Jordan had given the automatic rifle back to Agustín and slung his own submachine gun over his back, and he was putting bombs out of his pockets into the saddlebags, and he stuffed one empty pack inside the other and tied that one behind his saddle. Then Pilar came up, so breathless from the climb she could not talk, but only motioned.

Then Pablo stuffed three hobbles he had in his hand into a saddlebag, stood up and said, *"Qué tal,* woman?" and she only nodded, and then they were all mounting.

Robert Jordan was on the big gray he had first seen in the snow of the morning of the day before and he felt that it was much horse between his legs and under his hands. He was wearing rope-soled shoes and the stirrups were a little too short; his submachine gun was slung over his shoulder, his pockets were full of clips and he was sitting reloading the one used clip, the reins under one arm, tight, watching Pilar mount into a strange sort of seat on top of the duffle lashed onto the saddle of the buckskin.

"Cut that stuff loose for God's sake," Primitivo said. "Thou wilt fall and the horse cannot carry it."

"Shut up," said Pilar. "We go to make a life with this."

"Canst ride like that, woman?" Pablo asked her from the *guardia-civil* saddle on the great bay horse.

"Like any milk peddler," Pilar told him. "How do you go, old one?"

"Straight down. Across the road. Up the far slope and into the timber where it narrows."

"Across the road?" Agustín wheeled beside him, kicking his soft-

heeled, canvas shoes against the stiff, unresponding belly of one of the horses Pablo had recruited in the night.

"Yes, man. It is the only way," Pablo said. He handed him one of the lead ropes. Primitivo and the gypsy had the others.

"Thou canst come at the end if thou will, *Inglés,"* Pablo said. "We cross high enough to be out of range of that *máquina* . But we will go separately and riding much and then be together where it narrows above."

"Good," said Robert Jordan.

They rode down through the timber toward the edge of the road. Robert Jordan rode just behind Maria. He could not ride beside her for the timber. He caressed the gray once with his thigh muscles, and then held him steady as they dropped down fast and sliding through the pines, telling the gray with his thighs as they dropped down what the spurs would have told him if they had been on level ground.

"Thou," he said to Maria, "go second as they cross the road. First is not so bad though it seems bad. Second is good. It is later that they are always watching for."

"But thou—"

"I will go suddenly. There will be no problem. It is the places in line that are bad."

He was watching the round, bristly head of Pablo, sunk in his shoulders as he rode, his automatic rifle slung over his shoulder. He was watching Pilar, her head bare, her shoulders broad, her knees higher than her thighs as her heels hooked into the bundles. She looked back at him once and shook her head.

"Pass the Pilar before you cross the road," Robert Jordan said to Maria.

Then he was looking through the thinning trees and he saw the oiled dark of the road below and beyond it the green slope of the hillside. We are above the culvert, he saw, and just below the height where the road drops down straight toward the bridge in

that long sweep. We are around eight hundred yards above the bridge. That is not out of range for the Fiat in that little tank if they have come up to the bridge.

"Maria," he said. "Pass the Pilar before we reach the road and ride wide up that slope."

She looked back at him but did not say anything. He did not look at her except to see that she had understood.

"Comprendes?" he asked her.

She nodded.

"Move up," he said.

She shook her head.

"Move up!"

"Nay," she told him, turning around and shaking her head. "I go in the order that I am to go."

Just them Pablo dug both his spurs into the big bay and he plunged down the last pine-needled slope and cross the road in a pound- ing, sparking of shod hooves. The others came behind him and Robert Jordan saw them crossing the road and slamming on up the green slope and heard the machine gun hammer at the bridge. Then he heard a noise come sweeeish-crack-boom! The boom was a sharp crack that widened in the cracking and on the hillside he saw a small fountain of earth rise with a plume of gray smoke. Sweeish-crack-boom! It came again, the swishing like the noise of a rocket and there was another up-pulsing of dirt and smoke farther up the hillside.

Ahead of him the gypsy was stopped beside the road in the shelter of the last trees. He looked ahead at the slope and then he looked back toward Robert Jordan.

"Go ahead, Rafael," Robert Jordan said. "Gallop, man!"

The gypsy was holding the lead rope with the pack-horse pulling his head taut behind him.

"Drop the pack-horse and gallop!" Robert Jordan said.

He saw the gypsy's hand extended behind him, rising higher and

higher, seeming to take forever as his heels kicked into the horse he was riding and the rope came taut, then dropped, and he was across the road and Robert Jordan was knee-ing against a frightened pack-horse that bumped back into him as the gypsy crossed the hard, dark road and he heard his horse's hooves clumping as he galloped up the slope.

Wheeeeeeish-ca-rack! The flat trajectory of the shell came and he saw the gypsy jink like a running boar as the earth spouted the little black and gray geyser ahead of him. He watched him galloping, slow and reaching now, up the long green slope and the gun threw behind him and ahead of him and he was under the fold of the hill with the others.

I can't take the damned pack-horse, Robert Jordan thought. Though I wish I could keep the son of a bitch on my off side. I'd like to have him between me and that 47 mm. they're throwing with. By God, I'll try to get him up there anyway.

He rode up to the pack-horse, caught hold of the hackamore, and then, holding the rope, the horse trotting behind him, rode fifty yards up through the trees. At the edge of the trees he looked down the road past the truck to the bridge. He could see men out on the bridge and behind it looked like a traffic jam on the road. Robert Jordan looked around, saw what he wanted finally and reached up and broke a dead limb from a pine tree. He dropped the hackamore, edged the pack-horse up to the slope that slanted down to the road and then hit him hard across the rump with the tree branch. "Go on, you son of a bitch," he said, and threw the dead branch after him as the pack-horse crossed the road and started across the slope. The branch hit him and the horse broke from a run into a gallop.

Robert Jordan rode thirty yards farther up the road; beyond that the bank was too steep. The gun was firing now with the rocket whish and the cracking, dirt-spouting boom. "Come on, you big gray fascist bastard," Robert Jordan said to the horse and put him down the slope in a sliding plunge. Then he was out in the open,

over the road that was so hard under the hooves he felt the pound of it come up all the way to his shoulders, his neck and his teeth, onto the smooth of the slope, the hooves finding it, cutting it, pounding it, reaching, throwing, going, and he looked down across the slope to where the bridge showed now at a new angle he had never seen. It crossed in profile now without foreshortening and in the center was the broken place and behind it on the road was the little tank and behind the little tank was a big tank with a gun that flashed now yellow-bright as a mirror and the screech as the air ripped apart seemed almost over the gray neck that stretched ahead of him, and he turned his head as the dirt fountained up the hillside. The pack-horse was ahead of him swinging too far to the right and slowing down and Robert Jordan, galloping, his head turned a little toward the bridge, saw the line of trucks halted behind the turn that showed now clearly as he was gaining height, and he saw the bright yellow flash that signalled the instant whish and boom, and the shell fell short, but he heard the metal sailing from where the dirt rose.

He saw them all ahead in the edge of the timber watching him and he said, *"Arre caballo!* Go on, horse!" and felt his big horse's chest surging with the steepening of the slope and saw the gray neck stretching and the gray ears ahead and he reached and patted the wet gray neck, and he looked back at the bridge and saw the bright flash from the heavy, squat, mud-colored tank there on the road and then he did not hear any whish but only a banging acrid smelling clang like a boiler being ripped apart and he was under the gray horse and the gray horse was kicking and he was trying to pull out from under the weight.

He could move all right. He could move toward the right. But his left leg stayed perfectly flat under the horse as he moved to the right. It was as though there was a new joint in it; not the hip joint but another one that went sideways like a hinge. Then he knew what it was all right and just then the gray horse knee-ed himself

up and Robert Jordan's right leg, that had kicked the stirrup loose just as it should, slipped clear over the saddle and came down beside him and he felt with his two hands of his thigh bone where the left leg lay flat against the ground and his hands both felt the sharp bone and where it pressed against the skin.

The gray horse was standing almost over him and he could see his ribs heaving. The grass was green where he sat and there were meadow flowers in it and he looked down the slope across to the road and the bridge and the gorge and the road and saw the tank and waited for the next flash. It came almost at once with again no whish and in the burst of it, with the smell of the high explosive, the dirt clods scattering and the steel whirring off, he saw the big gray horse sit quietly down beside him as though it were a horse in a circus. And then, looking at the horse sitting there, he heard the sound the horse was making.

Then Primitivo and Agustín had him under the armpits and were dragging him up the last slope and the new joint in his leg let it swing any way the ground swung it. Once a shell whished close over them and they dropped him and fell flat, but the dirt scattered over them and and the metal sung off and they picked him up again. And then they had him up to the shelter of the long draw in the timber where the horses were, and Maria, Pilar and Pablo were standing over him.

Maria was kneeling by him and saying, "Roberto, what hast thou?"

He said, sweating heavily, "The left leg is broken, *guapa."*

"We will bind it up," Pilar said. "Thou canst ride that." She pointed to one of the horses that was packed. "Cut off the load."

Robert Jordan saw Pablo shake his head and he nodded at him.

"Get along," he said. Then he said, "Listen, Pablo. Come here."

The sweat-streaked, bristly face bent down by him and Robert Jordan smelt the full smell of Pablo. "Let us speak," he said to Pilar and Maria. "I have to speak to Pablo."

“Does it hurt much?” Pablo asked. He was bending close over Robert Jordan.

“No. I think the nerve is crushed. Listen. Get along. I am mucked, see? I will talk to the girl for a moment. When I say to take her, take her. She will want to stay. I will only speak to her for a moment.”

“Clearly, there is not much time,” Pablo said.

“Clearly.”

“I think you would do better in the Republic,” Robert Jordan said.

“Nay. I am for Gredos.”

“Use thy head.”

“Talk to her now,” Pablo said. “There is little time. I am sorry thou hast this, *Inglés.* “

“Since I have it—” Robert Jordan said. “Let us not speak of it. But use thy head. Thou hast much head. Use it.”

“Why would I not?” said Pablo. “Talk now fast, *Inglés.* There is no time.”

Pablo went over to the nearest tree and watched down the slope, across the slope and up the road across the gorge. Pablo was looking at the gray horse on the slope with true regret on his face and Pilar and Maria were with Robert Jordan where he sat against the tree trunk.

“Slit the trouser, will thee?” he said to Pilar. Maria crouched by him and did not speak. The sun was on her hair and her face was twisted as a child’s contorts before it cries. But she was not crying.

Pilar took her knife and slit his trouser leg down below the lefthand pocket. Robert Jordan spread the cloth with his hands and looked at the stretch of his thigh. Ten inches below the hip joint there was a pointed, purple swelling like a sharp-peaked little tent and as he touched it with his fingers he could feel the snapped-off thigh bone tight against the skin. His leg was lying at an odd angle. He looked up at Pilar. Her face had the same expression as Maria’s.

"Anda," he said to her. "Go."

She went away with her head down without saying anything nor looking back and Robert Jordan could see her shoulders shaking.

"Guapa," he said to Maria and took hold of her two hands.

"Listen. We will not be going to Madrid—"

Then she started to cry.

"No, *guapa,* don't," he said. "Listen. We will not go to Madrid now but I go always with thee wherever thou goest. Understand?" She said nothing and pushed her head against his cheek with her arms around him.

"Listen to this well, rabbit," he said. He knew there was a great hurry and he was sweating very much, but this had to be said and understood. "Thou wilt go now, rabbit. But I go with thee. As long as there is one of us there is both of us. Do you understand?"

"Nay, I stay with thee."

"Nay, rabbit. What I do now I do alone. I could not do it well with thee. If thou goest then I go, too. Do you not see how it is? Whichever one there is, is both."

"I will stay with thee."

"Nay, rabbit. Listen. That people cannot do together. Each one must do it alone. But if thou goest then I go with thee. It is in that way that I go too. Thou wilt go now, I know. For thou art good and kind. Thou wilt go now for us both."

"But it is easier if! stay with thee," she said. "It is better for me."

"Yes. Therefore go for a favor. Do it for me since it is what thou canst do."

"But you don't understand, Roberto. What about *me?* It is worse for me to go."

"Surely," he said. "It is harder for thee. But I am thee also now."

She said nothing.

He looked at her and he was sweating heavily and he spoke now, trying harder to do something than he had ever tried in all his life.

“Now you will go for us both,” he said. “You must not be selfish, rabbit. You must do your duty now.”

She shook her head.

“You are me now,” he said. “Surely thou must feel it, rabbit.

“Rabbit, listen,” he said. “Truly thus I go too. I swear it to thee.”

She said nothing.

“Now you see it,” he said. “Now I see it is clear. Now thou wilt go. Good. Now you are going. Now you have said you will go.”

She had said nothing.

“Now I thank thee for it. Now you are going well and fast and far and we both go in thee. Now put thy hand here. Now put thy head down. Nay, put it down. That is right. Now I put my hand there. Good. Thou art so good. Now do not think more. Now art thou doing what thou should. Now thou art obeying. Not me but us both. The me in thee. Now you go for us both. Truly. We both go in thee now. This I have promised thee. Thou art very good to go and very kind.”

He jerked his head at Pablo, who was half-looking at him from the tree and Pablo started over. He motioned with his thumb to Pilar.

“We will go to Madrid another time, rabbit,” he said. “Truly. Now stand up and go and we both go. Stand up. See?”

“No,” she said and held him tight around the neck.

He spoke now still calmly and reasonably but with great authority.

“Stand up,” he said. “Thou art me too now. Thou art all there will be of me. Stand up.”

She stood up slowly, crying, and with her head down. Then she dropped quickly beside him and then stood up again, slowly and tiredly, as he said, “Stand up, *guapa.”*

Pilar was holding her by the arm and she was standing there.

“Vámonos,” Pilar said. “Dost lack anything, *Inglés?”* She looked at him and shook her head.

"No," he said and went on talking to Maria.

"There is no goodbye, *guapa,* because we are not apart. That it should be good in the Gredos. Go now. Go good. Nay," he spoke now still calmly and reasonably as Pilar walked the girl along. "Do not turn around. Put thy foot in. Yes. Thy foot in. Help her up," he said to Pilar. "Get her in the saddle. Swing up now."

He turned his head, sweating, and looked down the slope, then back toward where the girl was in the saddle with Pilar by her and Pablo just behind. "Now go," he said. "Go."

She started to look around. "Don't look around," Robert Jordan said. "Go." And Pablo hit the horse across the crupper with a hobbling strap and it looked as though Maria tried to slip from the saddle but Pilar and Pablo were riding close up against her and Pilar was holding her and the three horses were going up the draw.

"Roberto," Maria turned and shouted. "Let me stay! Let me stay!"

"I am with thee," Robert Jordan shouted. "I am with thee now. We are both there. Go!" Then they were out of sight around the corner of the draw and he was soaking wet with sweat and looking at nothing.

Agustín was standing by him.

"Do you want me to shoot thee, *Inglés?"* he asked, leaning down close. *"Quieres?* It is nothing."

"No hace faIta," Robert Jordan said. "Get along. I am very well here."

"Me cago en la leche Qué me han dado!" Agustín said. He was crying so he could not see Robert Jordan clearly. *"Salud, Inglés."*

"Salud, old one," Robert Jordan said. He was looking down the slope now. "Look well after the cropped head, wilt thou?"

"There is no problem," Agustín said. "Thou has what thou needest?"

"There are very few shells for this *rndquina,* so I will keep it," Robert Jordan said. "Thou canst now get more. For that other and

the one of Pablo, yes."

"I cleaned out the barrel," Agustín said. "Where thou plugged it in the dirt with the fall."

"What became of the pack-horse?"

"The gypsy caught it."

Agustín was on the horse now but he did not want to go. He leaned far over toward the tree where Robert Jordan lay.

"Go on, *viejo,"* Robert Jordan said to him. "In war there are many things like this."

"Qué puta es la guerra," Agustín said. "War is a bitchery."

"Yes, man, yes. But get on with thee."

"Salud, Inglés," Agustín said, clenching his right fist.

"Salud, " Robert Jordan said. "But get along, man."

Agustín wheeled his horse and brought his right fist down as though he cursed again with the motion of it and rode up the draw. All the others had been out of sight long before. He looked back where the draw turned in the timber and waved his fist. Robert Jordan waved and then Agustín, too, was out of sight .... Robert Jordan looked down the green slope of the hillside to the road and the bridge. I'm as well this way as any, he thought. It wouldn't be worth risking getting over on my belly yet, not as close as that thing was to the surface, and I can see better this way.

He felt empty and drained and exhausted from all of it and from them going and his mouth tasted of bile. Now, finally and at last, there was no problem. However all of it had been and however all of it would ever be now, for him, no longer was there any problem.

They were all gone now and he was alone with his back against a tree. He looked down across the green slope, seeing the gray horse where Agustín had shot him, and on down the slope to the road with the timber-covered country behind it. Then he looked at the bridge and across the bridge and watched the activity on the bridge and the road. He could see the trucks now, all down the lower road. The gray of the trucks showed through the trees. Then he looked

back up the road to where it came down over the hill. They will be coming soon now, he thought.

Pilar will take care of her as well as anyone can. You know that. Pablo must have a sound plan or he would not have tried it. You do not have to worry about Pablo. It does no good to think about Maria. Try to believe what you told her. That is the best. And who says it is not true? Not you. You don't say it, any more than you would say the things did not happen that happened. Stay with what you believe now. Don't get cynical. The time is too short and you have just sent her away. Each one does what he can. You can do nothing for yourself but perhaps you can do something for another. Well, we had all our luck in four days. Not four days. It was afternoon when I first got there and it will not be noon today. That makes not quite three days and three nights. Keep it accurate, he said. Quite accurate.

I think you better get down now, he thought. You better get fixed around some way where you will be useful instead ofleaning against this tree like a tramp. You have had much luck. There are many worse things than this. Everyone has to do this, one day or another. You are not afraid of it once you know you have to do it, are you? No, he said, truly. It was lucky the nerve was crushed, though. I cannot even feel that there is anything below the break. He touched the lower part of his leg and it was as though it were not part of his body.

He looked down the hill slope again and he thought, I hate to leave it, is all. I hate to leave it very much and I hope I have done some good in it. I have tried to with what talent I had. *Have, you mean. All right, have.*

I have fought for what I believed in for a year now. If we win here we will win everywhere. The world is a fine place and worth the fighting for and I hate very much to leave it. And you had a lot of luck, he told himself, to have had such a good life. You've had just as good a life as grandfather's though not as long. You've had

as good a life as anyone because of these last days. You do not want to complain when you have been so lucky. I wish there was some way to pass on what I've learned, though. Christ, I was learning fast there at the end. I'd like to talk to Karkov. That is in Madrid. Just over the hills there, and down across the plain. Down out of the gray rocks and the pines, the heather and the gorse, across the yellow high plateau you see it rising white and beautiful. That part is just as true as Pilar's old women drinking the blood down at the slaughterhouse. There's no *one* thing that's true. It's all true. The way the planes are beautiful whether they are ours or theirs. The hell they are, he thought.

You take it easy, now, he said. Get turned over now while you still have time. Listen, one thing. Do you remember? Pilar and the hand? Do you believe that crap? No, he said. Not with everything that's happened? No, I don't believe it. She was nice about it early this morning before the show started. She was afraid maybe I believed it. I don't, though. But she does. They see something. Or they feel something. Like a bird dog. What about extra-sensory perception? What about obscenity? he said. She wouldn't say Goodbye, he thought, because she knew if she did Maria would never go. That Pilar. Get yourself turned over, Jordan. But he was reluctant to try it.

Then he remembered that he had the small flask in his hip pocket and he thought, I'll take a good spot of the giant killer and then I'll try it. But the flask was not there when he felt for it. Then he felt that much more alone because he knew there was not going to be even that. I guess I'd counted on that, he said.

Do you suppose Pablo took it? Don't be silly. You must have lost it at the bridge. "Come on now, Jordan," he said. "Over you go."

Then he took hold of his left leg with both hands and pulled on it hard, pulling toward the foot while he lay down beside the tree he had been resting his back against. Then lying flat and pulling hard on the leg, so the broken end of the bone would not come up

and cut through the thigh, he turned slowly around on his rump until the back of his head was facing downhill. Then with his broken leg, held by both hands, uphill, he put the sole of his right foot against the instep of his left foot and pressed hard while he rolled, sweating, over onto his face and chest. He got onto his elbows, stretched the left leg well behind him with both hands and a far, sweating, push with the right foot and there he was. He felt with his fingers on the left thigh and it was all right. The bone end had not punctured the skin and the broken end was well into the muscle now.

The big nerve must have been truly smashed when that damned horse rolled on it, he thought. It truly doesn't hurt at all. Except now in certain changes of positions. That's when the bone pinches something else. You see? he said. You see what luck is? You didn't need the giant killer at all.

He reached over for the submachine gun, took the clip out that was in the magazine, felt in his pocket for clips, opened the action and looked through the barrel, put the clip back into the groove of the magazine until it clicked, and then looked down the hill slope. Maybe half an hour, he thought. Now take it easy.

Then he looked at the hillside and he looked at the pines and he tried not to think at all.

Then he looked at the stream and he remembered how it had been under the bridge in the cool of the shadow. I wish they would come, he thought. I do not want to get in any sort of mixed-up state before they come.

Who do you suppose has it easier? Ones with religion or just taking it straight? It comforts them very much but we know there is no thing to fear. It is only missing it that's bad. Dying is only bad when it takes a long time and hurts so much that it humiliates you. That is where you have all the luck, see? You don't have any of that.

It's wonderful they've got away. I don't mind this at all now they

are away. It *is* sort of the way I said. It is really very much that way. Look how different it would be if they were all scattered out across that hill where that gray horse is. Or if we were all cooped up here waiting for it. No. They're gone. They're away. Now if the attack were only a success. What do you want? Everything. I want everything and I will take whatever I get. If this attack is no good another one will be. I never noticed when the planes came back. *God, that was lucky I could make her go.*

I'd like to tell grandfather about this one. I'll bet he never had to go over and find his people and do a show like this. How do you know? He may have done fifty. No, he said. Be accurate. Nobody did any fifty like this one. Nobody did five. Nobody did one maybe not just like this. Sure. They must have.

I wish they would come now, he said. I wish they would come right now because the leg is starting to hurt now. It must be the swelling.

We were going awfully good when that thing hit us, he thought. But it was only luck it didn't come while I was under the bridge. When a thing is wrong something's bound to happen. You were bitched when they gave Golz those orders. That was what you knew and it was probably that which Pilar felt. But later on we will have these things much better organized. We ought to have portable short wave transmitters. *Yes, there's a lot of things we ought to have.* I ought to carry a spare leg, too.

He grinned at that sweatily because the leg, where the big nerve had been bruised by the fall, was hurting badly now. Oh, let them come, he said. I don't want to do that business that my father did. I will do it all right but I'd much prefer not to have to. I'm against that. Don't think about that. Don't think at all. I wish the bastards would come, he said. I wish so very much they'd come.

His leg was hurting very badly now. The pain had started suddenly with the swelling after he had moved and he said, Maybe I'll just do it now. I guess I'm not awfully good at pain. Listen, if I

do that now you wouldn't misunderstand, would you? *Who are you talking to?* Nobody, he said. Grandfather, I guess. No. Nobody. Oh bloody it, I wish that they would come.

Listen, I may have to do that because if I pass out or anything like that I am no good at all and if they bring me to they will ask me a lot of questions and do things and all and that is no good. It's much best not to have them do those things. So why wouldn't it be all right to just do it now and then the whole thing would be over with? Because oh, listen, yes, listen, *let them come now.*

You're not good at this, Jordan, he said. Not so good at this. And who is so good at this? I don't know and I don't really care right now. But you are not. That's right. You're not at all. Oh not at all, at all. I think it would be all right to do it now? Don't you?

No, it isn't. Because there is something you can do yet. As long as you know what it is you have to do it. As long as you remember what it is you have to wait for that. *Come on. Let them come. Let them come. Let them come!*

Think about them being away, he said. Think about them going through the timber. Thik about them crossing a creek. Think about them riding through the heather. Think about them going up the slope. Think about them O. K. tonight. Think about them travelling, all night. Think about them hiding up tomorrow. Think about them. God damn it, think about them. *That's just as far as I can think about them,* he said.

Think about Montana. *I can't.* Think about Madrid. *I can't.* Think about a cool drink of water. *All right.* That's what it will be like. Like a cool drink of water. *You're a liar.* It will just be nothing. That's all it will be. Just nothing. Then do it. *Do it.* Do it now. It's all right to do it now. Go on and do it now. *No, you have to wait.* What for? You know all right. *Then wait.*

I can't wait any longer now, he said. If I wait any longer I'll pass out. I know because I've felt it starting to go three times now and I've held it. I held it all right. But I don't know about any more.

What I think is you've got an internal hemorrhage there from where that thigh bone's cut around inside. Especially on that turning business. That makes the swelling and that's what weakens you and makes you start to pass. It would be all right to do it now. Really, I'm telling you that it would be all right.

And if you wait and hold them up even a little while or just get the officer that may make all the difference. One thing well done can make —

All right, he said. And he lay very quietly and tried to hold on to himself that he felt slipping away from himself as you feel snow starting to slip sometimes on a mountain slope, and he said, now quietly, then let me last until they come.

Robert Jordan's luck held very good because he saw, just then, the cavalry ride out of the timber and cross the road. He watched them coming riding up the slope. He saw the trooper who stopped by the gray horse and shouted to the officer who rode over to him. He watched them both looking down at the gray horse. They recognized him of course. He and his rider had been missing since the early morning of the day before.

Robert Jordan saw them there on the slope, close to him now, and below he saw the road and the bridge and the long lines of vehicles below it. He was completely integrated now and he took a good long look at everything. Then he looked up at the sky. There were big white clouds in it. He touched the palm of his hand against the pine needles where he lay and he touched the bark of the pine trunk that he lay behind.

Then he rested easily as he could with his two elbows in the pine needles and the muzzle of the submachine gun resting against the trunk of the pine tree.

As the officer came trotting now on the trail of the horses of the band he would pass twenty yards below where Robert Jordan lay.

At that distance there would be no problem. The officer was Lieutenant Berrendo. He had come up from La Granja when they had been ordered up after the first report of the attack on the lower post. They had ridden hard and had then had to swing back, because the bridge had been blown, to cross the gorge high above and come around through the timber. Their horses were wet and blown and they had to be urged into the trot.

Lieutenant Berrendo, watching the trail, came riding up, his thin face serious and grave. His submachine gun lay across his saddle in the crook of his left arm. Robert Jordan lay behind the tree, holding onto himself very carefully and delicately to keep his hands steady. He was waiting until the officer reached the sunlit place where the first trees of the pine forest joined the green slope of the meadow. He could feel his heart beating against the pine needle floor of the forest.

THE END

ERNEST

HEMINGWAY

ACROSS THE RIVER AND INTO THE TREES

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

Across The River and Into the Trees

Ernest Hemingway

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

CONTENTS

Dedication

Note

Chapter I

Chapter II

Chapter III

Chapter IV

Chapter V

Chapter VI

Chapter VII

Chapter VIII

Chapter IX

Chapter X

Chapter XI

Chapter XII

Chapter XIII

Chapter XIV

Chapter XV

Chapter XVI

Chapter XVII

Chapter XVIII

Chapter XIX

Chapter XX

Chapter XXI

Chapter XXII

Chapter XXIII

Chapter XXIV

Chapter XXV

Chapter XXVI

Chapter XXVII

Chapter XXVIII

Chapter XXIX

Chapter XXX

Chapter XXXI

Chapter XXXII

Chapter XXXIII

Chapter XXXIV

Chapter XXXV

Chapter XXXVI

Chapter XXXVII

Chapter XXXVIII

Chapter XXXIX

Chapter XL

Chapter XLI

Chapter XLII

Chapter XLIII

Chapter XLIV

Chapter XLV

Dedication

To Mary with Love

Note

In view of a recent tendency to identify characters in fiction with real people, it seems proper to state that there are no real people in this volume: both the characters and their names are fictitious. The names or designations of any military units are fictitious. There are no living people nor existing military units presented in this book.

Chapter I

They started two hours before daylight, and at first, it was not necessary to break the ice across the canal as other boats had gone on ahead. In each boat, in the darkness, so you could not see, but only hear him, the poler stood in the stern, with his long oar. The shooter sat on a shooting stool fastened to the top of a box that contained his lunch and shells, and the shooter's two, or more, guns were propped against the load of wooden decoys. Somewhere, in each boat, there was a sack with one or two live mallard hens, or a hen and a drake, and in each boat there was a dog who shifted and shivered uneasily at the sound of the wings of the ducks that passed overhead in the darkness.

Four of the boats went on up the main canal toward the big lagoon to the north. A fifth boat had already turned off into a side canal. Now, the sixth boat turned south into a shallow lagoon, and there was no broken water.

It was all ice, new-frozen during the sudden, windless cold of the night. It was rubbery and bending against the thrust of the boatman's oar. Then it would break as sharply as a pane of glass, but the boat made little forward progress.

"Give me all oar," the shooter in the sixth boat said. He stood up and braced himself carefully. He could hear the ducks passing in the darkness, and feel the restless lurching of the dog. To the north he heard the sound of breaking ice from the other boats.

"Be careful," the poler in the stern said. "Don't tip the boat over."

"I am a boatman, too," the shooter said.

He took the long oar the boatman handed him and reversed it so he could hold it by the blade. Holding the blade he reached forward and punched the handle through the ice. He felt the firm bottom of the shallow lagoon, put his weight on the top of the wide oar blade, and holding with both hands and, first pulling, then shoving, until the pole hold was well to the stern, he drove the boat ahead to break the ice. The ice broke like sheets of plate glass as the boat drove into it, and onto it, and astern the boatman shoved them ahead into the broken passage.

After a while, the shooter, who was working hard and steadily and sweating in his heavy clothes, asked the boatman, "Where is the shooting barrel?"

"Off there to the left. In the middle of the next bay."

"Should I turn for it now?"

"As you wish."

"What do you mean, as I wish? You know the water. Is there water to carry us there?"

"The tide is low. Who knows?"

"It will be daylight before we get there if we don't hurry."

The boatman did not answer.

All right, you surly jerk, the shooter thought to himself. We are going to get there. We've made two-thirds of the way now and if you are worried about having to work to break ice to pick up birds, that is altogether too bad.

"Get your back in it, jerk," he said in English.

"What?" the boatman asked in Italian.

"I said let's go. It's going to be light."

It was daylight before they reached the oaken staved hogshead sunk in the bottom of the lagoon. It was surrounded by a sloping rim of earth that had been planted with sedge and grass, and the shooter swung carefully up onto this, feeling the frozen grasses break as he stepped on them. The boatman lifted the combination shooting stool and shell box out of the boat and handed it to the

shooter, who leaned over and placed it in the bottom of the big barrel.

The shooter, wearing his hip boots and an old combat jacket, with a patch on the left shoulder that no one understood, and with the slight light places on the straps, where stars had been removed, climbed down into the barrel and the boatman handed him his two guns.

He placed them against the wall of the barrel and hung his other shell bag between them, hanging it on two hooks built into the wall of the sunken barrel. Then he leaned the guns against each side of the shell bag.

"Is there water?" he asked the boatman.

"No water," the boatman said.

"Can you drink the lagoon water?"

"No. It is unhealthy."

The shooter was thirsty from the hard work of breaking the ice and driving the boat in and he felt his anger rise, and then held it, and said, "Can I help you in the boat to break ice to put out the decoys?"

"No," the boatman said and shoved the boat savagely out onto the thin sheet ice that cracked and ripped as the boat drove up onto it. The boatman commenced smashing at the ice with the blade of his oar and then started tossing decoys out to the side and behind him.

He's in a beautiful mood, the shooter thought. He's a big brute, too. I worked like a horse coming out here. He just pulled his weight and that's all. What the hell is eating him? This is his trade, isn't it?

He arranged the shooting stool so he would have the maximum swing to left and right, opened a box of shells, and filled his pockets and opened another of the boxes of shells in the shell bag so he could reach into it easily. In front of him, where the lagoon lay glazed in the first light, was the black boat and the tall, heavily

built boatman smashing with his oar at the ice and tossing decoys overboard as though he were ridding himself of something obscene.

It was getting lighter now and the shooter could see the low line of the near point across the lagoon. Beyond that point he knew there were two other shooting posts and far beyond it there was more marsh and then the open sea. He loaded both his guns and checked the position of the boat that was putting out decoys.

From behind him, he heard the incoming whisper of wings and he crouched, took hold of his right hand gun with his right hand as he looked up from under the rim of the barrel, then stood to shoot at the two ducks that were dropping down, their wings set to brake, coming down dark in the gray dim sky, slanting toward the decoys.

His head low, he swung the gun on a long slant, down, well and ahead of the second duck, then without looking at the result of his shot he raised the gun smoothly, up, up ahead and to the left of the other duck that was climbing to the left and as he pulled, saw it fold in flight and drop among the decoys in the broken ice. He looked to his right and saw the first duck a black patch on the same ice. He knew he had shot carefully on the first duck, far to the right of where the boat was, and on the second, high out and to the left, letting the duck climb far up and to the left to be sure the boat was out of any line of fire. It was a lovely double, shot exactly as he should have shot, with complete consideration and respect for the position of the boat, and he felt very good as he reloaded.

“Listen,” the man in the boat called. “Don’t shoot toward the boat.”

I’ll be a sad son of a bitch, the shooter said to himself. I will indeed.

“Get your decoys out,” he called to the man in the boat. “But get them out fast. I won’t shoot until they are all out. Except straight overhead.”

The man in the boat said nothing that could be heard.

I can’t figure it, the shooter thought to himself. He knows the

game. He knows I split the work, or more, coming out. I never shot a safer or more careful duck in my life than that. What's the matter with him? I offered to put the dekes out with him. The hell with him.

Out on the right now, the boatman was still chopping angrily at the ice, and tossing out the wooden decoys in a hatred that showed in every move he made.

Don't let him spoil it, the shooter told himself. There won't be much shooting with this ice unless the sun should melt it later on. You probably will only have a few birds, so don't let him spoil it for you. You don't know how manymore times you will shoot ducks and do not let anything spoil it for you.

He watched the sky lightening beyond the long point of marsh, and turning in the sunken barrel, he looked out across the frozen lagoon, and the marsh, and saw the snow-covered mountains a long way off. Low as he was, no foothills showed, and the mountains rose abruptly from the plain. As he looked toward the mountains he could feel a breeze on his face and he knew, then, the wind would come from there, rising with the sun, and that some birds would surely come flying in from the sea when the wind disturbed them.

The boatman had finished putting out the decoys. They were in two bunches, one straight ahead and to the left toward where the sun would rise, and the other to the shooter's right. Now he dropped over the hen mallard with her string and anchor, and the calling duck bobbed her head under water, and raising and dipping her head, splashed water onto her back.

"Don't you think it would be good to break more ice around the edges?" the shooter called to the boatman. "There's not much water to attract them."

The boatman said nothing but commenced to smash at the jagged perimeter of ice with his oar. This ice breaking was unnecessary and the boatman knew it. But the shooter did not know it and he thought, I do not understand him but I must not let him

ruin it. I must keep it entire and not let him do it. Every time you shoot now can be the last shoot and no stupid son of a bitch should be allowed to ruin it. Keep your temper, boy, he told himself.

Chapter II

But he was not a boy. He was fifty and a Colonel of Infantry in the Army of the United States and to pass a physical examination that he had to take the day before he came down to Venice for this shoot, he had taken enough mannitol hexanitrate to, well he did not quite know what to—to pass, he said to himself.

The surgeon had been quite skeptical. But he noted the readings after taking them twice.

"You know, Dick," he said. "It isn't indicated; in fact it is definitely contraindicated in increased intraocular and intracranial pressure."

"I don't know what you are talking about," the shooter, who was not a shooter, then, except potentially, and was a Colonel of Infantry in the Army of the United States, reduced from being a general officer, said.

"I have known you a long time, Colonel. Or maybe it just seems a long time," the surgeon told him.

"It's been a long time," the Colonel said.

"We sound like song writers," the surgeon said. "But don't you ever run into anything, or let any sparks strike you, when you're really souped up on nitroglycerin. They ought to make you drag a chain like a high-octane truck.

"Wasn't my cardiograph O.K.?" the Colonel asked.

"Your cardiograph was wonderful, Colonel. It could have been that of a man of twenty-five. It might have been that of a boy of nineteen."

"Then what are you talking about?" the Colonel asked. That

much mannitol hexanitrate produced a certain amount of nausea, sometimes, and he was anxious for the interview to terminate. He was also anxious to lie down and take a seconal. I ought to write the manual of minor tactics for the heavy pressure platoon, he thought. Wish I could tell him that. Why don't I just throw myself on the mercy of the court? You never do, he told himself. You always plead them non-guilty.

"How many times have you been hit in the head?" the surgeon asked him.

"You know," the Colonel told him. "It's in my 201."

"How many times have you been hit *on* the head?"

"Oh Christ." Then he said. "You are asking for the army or as my physician?"

"As your physician. You didn't think I'd try to wind your clock, did you?"

"No, Wes. I'm sorry. Just what was it you wanted to know?"

"Concussions. "

"Real ones?"

"Any time you were cold or couldn't remember afterwards."

"Maybe ten," the Colonel said. "Counting polo. Give or take three."

"You poor old son of a bitch," the surgeon said. "Colonel, sir," he added.

"Can I go now?" the Colonel asked.

"Yes, sir," the surgeon said. "You're in good shape."

"Thanks," the Colonel said. "Want to go on a duck shoot down in the marshes at the mouth of the Tagliamento? Wonderful shoot. Some nice Italian kids I met up at Cortina own it."

"Is that where they shoot coots?"

"No. They shoot real ducks at this one. Good kids. Good shoot. Real ducks. Mallard, pintail, widgeon. Some geese. Just as good as at home when we were kids."

"I was kids in twenty-nine and thirty."

“That’s the first mean thing I ever heard you say.”

“I didn’t mean it like that. I just meant I didn’t remember when duck shooting was good. I’m a city boy, too.”

“That’s the only goddamn trouble with you, too. I never saw a city boy yet that was worth a damn.”

“You don’t mean that, do you, Colonel?”

“Of course, not. You know damn well I don’t.”

“You’re in good shape, Colonel,” the surgeon said. “I’m sorry I can’t go on the shoot. I can’t even shoot.”

“Hell,” said the Colonel. “That doesn’t make any difference. Neither can anybody else in this army. I’d like to have you around.”

“I’ll give you something else to back up what you’re using.”

“Is there anything?”

“Not really. They’re working on stuff, though.”

“Let ’em work,” the Colonel said.

“I think that’s a laudable attitude, sir.”

“Go to hell,” the Colonel said. “You sure you don’t want to go?”

“I get my ducks at Longchamps on Madison Avenue,” the surgeon said. “It’s air-conditioned in the summer and it’s warm in the winter and I don’t have to get up before first light and wear long-horned underwear.”

“All right, City Boy. You’ll never know.”

“I never wanted to know,” the surgeon said. “You’re in good shape, Colonel, sir.”

“Thanks,” said the Colonel and went out.

Chapter III

That was day before yesterday. Yesterday he had driven down from Trieste to Venice along the old road that ran from Monfalcone to Latisana and across the flat country. He had a good driver and he relaxed completely in the front seat of the car and looked out at all this country he had known when he was a boy.

It looks quite differently now, he thought. I suppose it is because the distances are all changed. Everything is much smaller when you are older. Then, too, the roads are better now and there is no dust. The only times I used to ride through it was in a camion. The rest of the times we walked. I suppose what I looked for then, was patches of shade when we fell out, and wells in farm yards. And ditches, too, he thought. I certainly looked for plenty of ditches.

They made a curve and crossed the Tagliamento on a temporary bridge. It was green along the banks and men were fishing along the far shore where it ran deep. The blown bridge was being repaired with a snarl of riveting hammers, and eight hundred yards away the smashed buildings and outbuildings of what was now a ruined country house once built by Longhena showed where the mediums had dropped their loads.

"Look at it," the driver said. "In this country you find a bridge or a railway station. Then go half a mile from it in any direction and you find it like that."

"I guess the lesson is," the Colonel said, "don't ever build yourself a country house, or a church, or hire Giotto to paint you any frescoes, if you've got a church, eight hundred yards away from any bridge."

“I knew there must be a lesson in it, sir,” the driver said.

They were past the ruined villa now and onto the straight road with the willows growing by the ditches still dark with winter, and the fields full of mulberry trees. Ahead a man was pedalling a bicycle and using both his hands to read a paper.

“If there are heavies the lesson ought to say a mile,” the driver said. “Would that be about right, sir?”

“If it’s guided missiles,” the Colonel said. “Better make it two hundred and fifty miles. Better give that cyclist some horn.”

The driver did, and the man moved over to the side of the road without either looking up or touching his handlebars. As they passed him, the Colonel tried to see what paper he was reading, but it was folded over.

“I guess a man would do better now not to build himself a fine house or a church, or to get who did you say it was to paint frescoes?”

“Giotto, I said. But it could be Piero della Francesca or Mantegna. Could be Michelangelo.”

“Do you know a lot about painters, sir?” the driver asked.

They were on a straight stretch of road now and were making time so that one farm blended, almost blurred, into another farm and you could only see what was far ahead and moving toward you. Lateral vision was just a condensation of fiat, low country in the winter. I’m not sure I like speed, the Colonel thought. Brueghel would have been in a hell of a shape if he had to look at the country like this.

“Painters?” he answered the driver. “I know quite a little about them, Burnham.”

“I’m Jackson, sir. Burnham’s up at the rest center at Cortina. That’s a fine place, sir.”

“I’m getting stupid,” the Colonel said. “Excuse me, Jackson. It is a fine place. Good chow. Well run. Nobody bothers you.”

“Yes, sir,” Jackson agreed. “Now the reason I asked you about

painters, is these madonnas. I thought I ought to see some painting so I went to that big place in Florence."

"The Uffizi? The Pitti?"

"Whatever they call it. The biggest one. And I kept looking at those paintings until madonnas started to run out of my ears. I tell you, Colonel, sir, a man who hasn't been checked out on this painting can only see just about so many madonnas and it gets him. You know my theory? You know how crazy they are about bambinis and the less they got to eat the more bambinis they got and that they have coming? Well, I think these painters were probably big bambini lovers like all Italians. I don't know these ones you mentioned just now, so I don't include them in my theory and you'll put me straight anyway. But it looks to me like these madonnas, that I really saw plenty of, sir, it looks to me like these just straight ordinary madonna painters were sort of a manifest, say, of this whole bambini business, if you understand what I mean."

"Plus the fact that they were restricted to religious subjects."

"Yes, sir. Then you think there is something to my theory?"

"Sure. I think it is a little more complicated, though."

"Naturally, sir. It's just my preliminary theory."

"Do you have any other theories on art, Jackson?"

"No, sir. That bambini theory is as far as I've thought it through. What I wish is, though, they would paint some good pictures of that high country up around the rest center at Cortina."

"Titian came from up there," the Colonel said. "At least they say he did. I went down the valley and saw the house where he was supposed to be born."

"Was it much of a place, sir?"

"Not so much."

"Well, if he painted any pictures of that country up around there, with those sunset color rocks and the pines and the snow and all the pointed steeples—"

"*Campaniles,*" the Colonel said. "Like that one ahead at Ceggia. It

means bell tower."

"Well, if he painted any really good pictures of that country I'd sure as hell like to trade him out of some of them."

"He painted some wonderful women," the Colonel said.

"If I had a joint or a roadhouse or some sort of an inn, say, I could use one of those," the driver said. "But if I brought home a picture of some woman, my old woman would run me from Rawlins to Buffalo. I'd be lucky if I *got* to Buffalo."

"You could give it to the local museum."

"All they got in the local museum is arrow heads, war bonnets, scalping knives, different scalps, petrified fish, pipes of peace, photographs of Liver Eating Johnston, and the skin of some bad man that they hanged him and some doctor skinned him out. One of those women pictures would be out of place there."

"See that next *campanile* down there across the plain?" the Colonel said. "I'll show you a place down there where we used to fight when I was a kid."

"Did you fight here, too, sir?"

"Yeah," the Colonel said.

"Who had Trieste in that war?"

"The Krauts, The Austrians, I mean."

"Did we ever get it?"

"Not till the end when it was over."

"Who had Florence and Rome?"

"We did."

"Well, I guess you weren't so damned bad off then."

"Sir," the Colonel said gently.

"I'm sorry, sir," the driver said quickly. "I was in the Thirty-Sixth Division, sir."

"I've seen the patch."

"I was thinking about the Rapido, sir, I didn't mean to be insolent or lacking in respect."

"You weren't," the Colonel said. "You were just thinking about

the Rapido. Listen, Jackson, everybody who's soldiered a long time has had their Rapidos and more than one."

"I couldn't take more than one, sir."

The car went through the cheerful town of San Dona di Piave. It was built up and new, but no more ugly than a middle western town, and it was as prosperous and as cheery as Fossalta, just up the river, is miserable and gloomy, the Colonel thought. Did Fossalta never get over the first war? I never saw it before it was smacked, he thought. They shelled it badly before the big fifteenth of June offensive in eighteen. Then we shelled it really badly before we retook it. He remembered how the attack had taken off from Monastier, gone through Fornace, and on this winter day he remembered how it had been that summer.

A few weeks ago he had gone through Fossalta and had gone out along the sunken road to find the place where he had been hit, out on the river bank. It was easy to find because of the bend of the river, and where the heavy machine gun post had been, the crater was smoothly grassed. It had been cropped, by sheep or goats, until it looked like a designed depression in a golf course. The river was slow and a muddy blue here, with reeds along the edges, and the Colonel, no one being in sight, squatted low, and looking across the river from the bank where you could never show your head in daylight, relieved himself in the exact place where he had determined, by triangulation, that he had been badly wounded thirty years before.

"A poor effort," he said aloud to the river and the river bank that were heavy with autumn quiet and wet from the fall rains. "But my own."

He stood up and looked around. There was no one in sight and he had left the car down the sunken road in front of the last and saddest rebuilt house in Fossalta.

"Now I'll complete the monument," he said to no one but the dead, and he took an old Sollingen clasp knife such as German

poachers carry, from his pocket. It locked on opening and, twirling it, he dug a neat hole in the moist earth. He cleaned the knife on his right combat boot and then inserted a brown ten thousand lira note in the hole and tamped it down and put the grass that he had cored out, over it.

"That is twenty years at 500 lira a year for the Medaglia d' Argento al Valore Militare. The V.C. carries ten guineas, I believe. The D.S.C. is non-productive. The Silver Star is free. I'll keep the change," he said.

It's fine now, he thought. It has merde, money, blood; look how that grass grows; and the iron's in the earth along with Gino's leg, both of Randolfo's legs, and my right kneecap. It's a wonderful monument. It has everything. Fertility, money, blood and iron. Sounds like a nation. Where fertility, money, blood and iron is, there is the fatherland. We need coal though. We ought to get some coal.

Then he looked across the river to the rebuilt white house that had once been rubble, and he spat in the river. It was a long spit and he just made it.

"I couldn't spit that night nor afterwards for a long time," he said. "But I spit good now for a man who doesn't chew."

He walked slowly back to where the car was parked. The driver was asleep.

"Wake up, son," he had said. "Turn her around and take that road toward Treviso. We don't need a map on this part. I'll give you the turns."

Chapter IV

Now, on his way into Venice, keeping strictly controlled and unthinking his great need to be there, the big Buick cleared the last of San Dona and came up onto the bridge over the Piave.

They crossed the bridge and were on the Italian side of the river and he saw the old sunken road again. It was as smooth and undistinguished now, as it was all along the river. But he could see the old positions. And now, along each side of the straight, flat, canal-bordered road they were making time on, were the willows of the two canals that had contained the dead. There had been a great killing at the last of the offensive and someone, to clear the river bank positions and the road in the hot weather, had ordered the dead thrown into the canals. Unfortunately, the canal gates were still in the Austrians' hands down the river, and they were closed.

So there was little movement to the water, and the dead had stayed there a long time, floating and bloating face up and face down regardless of nationality until they had attained colossal proportions. Finally, after organization had been established, labor troops hauled them out at night and buried them close to the road. The Colonel looked for added greenness close to the road but could not note any. However, there were many ducks and geese in the canals, and men were fishing in them all along the road.

They dug them all up anyway, the Colonel thought, and buried them in that big *ossario* up by Nervesa.

"We fought along here when I was a kid," the Colonel told the driver.

"It's a goddamn flat country to fight in," the driver said. "Did

you hold that river?"

"Yes," the Colonel said. "We held it and lost it and took it back again."

"There isn't a contour here as far as you can see."

"That was the trouble," the Colonel said. "You had to use contours you couldn't see, they were so small, and ditches and houses and canal banks and hedgerows. It was like Normandy only flatter. I think it must have been something like fighting in Holland."

"That river sure doesn't look anything like the Rapido."

"It was a pretty good old river," the Colonel said. "Up above, it had plenty of water then, before all these hydroelectric projects. And it had very deep and tricky channels in the pebbles and shingle when it was shallow. There was a place called the Grave di Papadopoli where it was plenty tricky."

He knew how boring any man's war is to any other man. and he stopped talking about it. They always take it personally, he thought. No one is interested in it, abstractly, except soldiers and there are not many soldiers. You make them and the good ones are killed, and above they are always bucking for something so hard they never look or listen. They are always thinking of what they have seen and while you are talking they are thinking of what they will say and what it may lead to in their advancement or their privilege. There was no sense boring this boy, who, for all his combat infantryman badge, his Purple Heart and the other things he wore, was in no sense a soldier but only a man placed, against his will, in uniform, who had elected to remain in the army for his own ends.

"What did you do in civil life, Jackson?" he asked.

"I was partners with my brother in a garage in Rawlins, Wyoming, sir."

"Are you going back there?"

"My brother got killed in the Pacific and the guy who was running the garage was no good," the driver said. "We lost what we

had put in it."

"That's bad," the Colonel said.

"You're goddamned right it's bad," the driver said and added, "sir."

The Colonel looked up the road.

He knew that if they kept on this road they would come, shortly, to the turn that he was waiting for; but he was impatient.

"Keep your eyes open and take a left hand turn on the road leading off this pike," he told the driver.

"Do you think those low roads will be good with this big car, sir?"

"We'll see," the Colonel said. "Hell, man, it hasn't rained in three weeks."

"I don't trust those side roads in this low country."

"If we get stuck, I'll haul you out with oxen."

"I was only thinking about the car, sir."

"Well, think about what I told you and turn off on the first left side road you see if it looks practicable."

"That looks like one coming up, from the hedges," the driver said.

"You're all clear behind. Pull up just ahead of it and I'll go over and have a look."

He stepped out of the car and walked across the wide, hard-surfaced road and looked at the narrow dirt road, with the swift flowing canal beside it, and the thick hedge beyond. Beyond the hedge, he saw a low red farmhouse with a big barn. The road was dry. There were not even cart ruts sunk in it. He got back into the car.

"It's a boulevard," he said. "Quit worrying."

"Yes, sir. It's your car, sir."

"'I know," the Colonel said. "I'm still paying for it. Say, Jackson, do you always suffer so much any time you go off a highway onto a secondary road?"

“No, sir. But there’s a lot of difference between a jeep, and a car as low hung as this. Do you know the clearance you have on your differential and your body frame on this?”

“I’ve got a shovel in the trunk and we’ve got chains. Wait till you see where we’re going after we leave Venice.”

“Do we go all the way in this car?”

“I don’t know. I’ll see.”

“Think about your fenders, sir.”

“We’ll cut the fenders off like the Indians do in Oklahoma. She’s over-fendered right now. She’s got too much of everything except engine. Jackson, that’s a real engine she’s got. One hundred and fifty ponies.”

“It certainly is, sir. It’s a great pleasure to drive that big engine on the good roads. That’s why I don’t want anything to happen to her.”

“That’s very good of you, Jackson. Now just quit suffering.”

“I’m not suffering, sir.”

“Good,” said the Colonel.

He was not, either, because just then he saw, beyond the line of close-bunched brown trees ahead, a sail moving along. It was a big red sail, raked sharply down from the peak, and it moved slowly behind the trees.

Why should it always move your heart to see a sail moving along through the country, the Colonel thought. Why does it move my heart to see the great, slow, pale oxen? It must be the gait as well as the look of them and the size and the color.

But a good fine big mule, or a string of pack mules in good condition, moves me, too. So does a coyote every time I ever see one, and a wolf, gaited like no other animal, gray and sure of himself, carrying that heavy head and with the hostile eyes.

“Ever see any wolves out around Rawlins, Jackson?”

“No, sir. Wolves were gone before my time; they poisoned them out. Plenty coyotes, though.”

"Do you like coyotes?"

"I like to hear them nights."

"So do I. Better than anything, except seeing a ship sailing along through the country."

"There's a boat doing that over there, sir."

"On the Sile canal," the Colonel told him. "She's a sailing barge going to Venice. This wind is off the mountains now and she makes it along pretty good. It's liable to turn really cold tonight if this wind holds and it ought to bring in plenty ducks. Turn to your left here and we'll run along the canal. There's a good road."

"They didn't have much duck shooting where I came from. But there was plenty of it in Nebraska along the Platte."

"Do you want to shoot where we're going?"

"I don't believe so, sir. I'm not much of a shot, and I'd rather stay in that sack. It's a Sunday morning, you know."

"I know," the Colonel said. "You can stay in the sack until noon if you want."

"I brought my repellent. I ought to sleep O.K."

"I'm not sure you'll need it," the Colonel said. "Did you bring any K-rations or Ten in One? They're liable to eat Italian food, you know."

"I brought a few cans to help out and a little stuff to give away."

"That's good," the Colonel said.

He was looking ahead now to see where the canal road joined the main highway again. There he knew that he would see it on a clear day such as this was. Across the marshes, brown as those at the mouths of the Mississippi around Pilot Town are in winter, and with their reeds bent by the heavy north wind, he saw the squared tower of the church at Torcello and the high *campanile* of Burano beyond it. The sea was a slate blue and he could see the sails of twelve sailing barges running with the wind for Venice.

I'll have to wait until we cross the Dese River above Noghera to see it perfectly, he thought. It is strange to remember how we

fought back there along the canal that winter to defend it and we never saw it. Then one time, I was back as far as Noghera and it was clear and cold like today, and I saw it across the water. But I never got into it. It is my city, though, because I fought for it when I was a boy, and now that I am half a hundred years old, they know I fought for it and am a part owner and they treat me well.

Do you think that's why they treat you well, he asked himself.

Maybe, he thought. Maybe they treat me well because I'm a chicken colonel on the winning side. I don't believe it, though. I hope not, anyway. It is not France, he thought.

There you fight your way into a city that you love and are very careful about breaking anything and then, if you have good sense, you are careful not to go back because you will meet some military characters who will resent your having fought your way in. *Vive la France et les pommes de terre frites. Liberté, Venalité, et Stupidité.* The great *clarté* of the French military thinking. They haven't had a military thinker since du Picq. He was a poor bloody Colonel, too. *Mangin, Maginot* and *Gamelin.* Take your choice, Gentlemen. Three schools of thought. One; I hit them on the nose. Two; I hide behind this thing which does not cover my left flank. Three; I hide my head in the sand like an ostrich, confident in the greatness of France as a military power and then take off.

Take off is putting it very cleanly and pleasantly. Sure, he thought, whenever you over-simplify you become unjust. Remember all the fine ones in the Resistance, remember Foch both fought and organized and remember how fine the people were. Remember your good friends and remember your de ads. Remember plenty things and your best friends again and the finest people that you know. Don't be a bitter nor a stupid. And what has that to do with soldiering as a trade? Cut it out, he told himself. You're on a trip to have fun.

"Jackson," he said, "are you happy?"

"Yes, sir."

“Good. Shortly, we are coming to a view that I want you to see. You only have to take one look at it. The entire operation will be practically painless.”

I wonder what he’s riding me for now, the driver thought. Just because he was a B.G. once he knows everything. If he was any good as a B.G. why didn’t he hold it? He’s been beat up so much he’s slug-nutty.

“There’s the view, Jackson,” the Colonel said. “Stop her by the side of the road and we’ll take a look.”

The Colonel and the driver walked over to the Venice side of the road and looked across the lagoon that was whipped by the strong, cold wind from the mountains that sharpened all the outlines of buildings so that they were geometrically clear.

“That’s Torcello directly opposite us,” the Colonel pointed. “That’s where the people lived that were driven off the mainland by the Visigoths, They built that church you see there with the square tower. There were thirty thousand people lived there once and they built that church to honor their Lord and to worship him. Then, after they built it, the mouth of the Sile River silted up or a big flood changed it, and all that land we came through just now got flooded and started to breed mosquitoes and malaria hit them. They all started to die, so the elders got together and decided they should pull out to a healthy place that would be defensible with boats, and where the Visigoths and the Lombards and the other bandits couldn’t get at them, because these bandits had no sea power. The Torcello boys were all great boatmen. So they took the stones of all their houses in barges, like that one we just saw, and they built Venice.”

He stopped. “Am I boring you, Jackson?”

“No, sir. I had no idea who pioneered Venice.”

“It was the boys from Torcello. They were very tough and they had very good taste in building. They came from a little place up the coast called Caorle. But they drew on all the people from the

towns and the farms behind when the Visigoths overran them. It was a Torcello boy who was running arms into Alexandria, who located the body of St. Mark and smuggled it out under a load of fresh pork so the infidel customs guards wouldn't check him. This boy brought the remains of St. Mark to Venice, and he's their patron saint and they have a cathedral there to him. But by that time, they were trading so far to the east that the architecture is pretty Byzantine for my taste. They never built any better than at the start there in Torcello. That's Torcello there."

It was, indeed.

"St. Mark's square is where the pigeons are and where they have that big cathedral that looks sort of like a moving picture palace, isn't it?"

"Right, Jackson. You're on the ball. If that's the way you look at it. Now you look beyond Torcello you will see the lovely *campanile* on Burano that has damn near as much list on it as the leaning tower of Pisa. That Burano is a very over-populated little island where the women make wonderful lace, and the men make bambinis and work daytimes in the glass factories in that next island you see on beyond with the other *campanile,* which is Murano. They make wonderful glass daytimes for the rich of all the world, and then they come home on the little vaporetto and make bambinis. Not everyone passes every night with his wife though. They hunt ducks nights too, with big punt guns, out along the edge of the marshes on this lagoon you're looking across now. All night long on a moonlight night you hear the shots." He paused.

"Now when you look past Murano you see Venice. That's my town. There's plenty more I could show you, but I think we probably ought to roll now. But take one good look at it. This is where you can see how it all happened. But nobody ever looks at it from here."

"It's a beautiful view. Thank you, sir."

"O.K.," the Colonel said. "Let's roll."

Chapter V

But he continued to look and it was all as wonderful to him and it moved him as it had when he was eighteen years old and had seen it first, understanding nothing of it and only knowing that it was beautiful. The winter had come very cold that year and all the mountains were white beyond the plain. It was necessary for the Austrians to try to break through at the angle where the Sile River and the old bed of the Piave were the only lines of defense.

If you had the old bed of the Piave then you had the Sile to fall back on if the first line did not hold. Beyond the Sile there was nothing but bare-assed plain and a good road network into the Veneto plain and the plains of Lombardy, and the Austrians attacked again and again and again late through the winter, to try to get onto this fine road that they were rolling on now which led straight to Venice. That winter the Colonel, who was a lieutenant then, and in a foreign army, which had always made him slightly suspect afterwards in his own army, and had done his career no good, had a sore throat all winter. This sore throat was from being in the water so much. You could not get dry and it was better to get wet quickly and stay wet.

The Austrian attacks were ill-coordinated, but they were constant and exasperated and you first had the heavy bombardment which was supposed to put you out of business, and then, when it lifted, you checked your positions and counted the people. But you had no time to care for wounded, since you knew that the attack was coming immediately, and then you killed the men who came wading across the marshes, holding their rifles above the water and

coming as slow as men wade, waist deep.

If they did not lift the shelling when it started, the Colonel, then a lieutenant, often thought, I do not know what we would be able to do. But they always lifted it and moved it back ahead of the attack. They went by the book.

If we had lost the old Piave and were on the Sile they would move it back to the second and third lines; although such lines were quite untenable, and they should have brought all their guns up very close and whammed it in all the time they attacked and until they breached us. But thank God, some high fool always controls it, the Colonel thought, and they did it piecemeal.

All that winter, with a bad sore throat, he had killed men who came, wearing the stick bombs hooked up on a harness under their shoulders with the heavy, calf hide packs and the bucket helmets. They were the enemy.

But he never hated them; nor could have any feeling about them. He commanded with an old sock around his throat, which had been dipped in turpentine, and they broke down the attacks with rifle fire and with the machine guns which still existed, or were usable, after the bombardment. He taught his people to shoot, really, which is a rare ability in continental troops, and to be able to look at the enemy when they came, and, because there was always a dead moment when the shooting was free, they became very good at it.

But you always had to count and count fast after the bombardment to know how many shooters you would have. He was hit three times that winter, but they were all gift wounds; small wounds in the flesh of the body without breaking bone, and he had become quite confident of his personal immortality since he knew he should have been killed in the heavy artillery bombardment that always preceded the attacks. Finally he did get hit properly and for good. No one of his other wounds had ever done to him what the first big one did. I suppose it is just the loss of the immortality, he

thought. Well, in a way, that is quite a lot to lose.

This country meant very much to him, more than he could, or would ever tell anyone and now he sat in the car happy that in another half hour they would be in Venice. He took two mannitol hexanitrate tablets; since he had always been able to spit since 1918, he could take them dry, and asked,

"How are you doing, Jackson?"

"Fine, sir."

"Take the left outside road when we hit the fork for Mestre and we'll be able to see the boats along the canal and miss that main traffic."

"Yes, sir," the driver said. "Will you check me on the fork?"

"Of course," the Colonel said.

They were coming up on Mestre fast, and already it was like going to New York the first time you were ever there in the old days when it was shining, white and beautiful. I stole that, he thought. But that was before the smoke. We are coming into my town, he thought. Christ, what a lovely town.

They made the left turn and came along the canal where the fishing boats tied up, and the Colonel looked at them and his heart was happy because of the brown nets and the wicker fish traps and the clean, beautiful lines of the boats. It's not that they are picturesque. The hell with picturesque. They are just damned beautiful.

They passed the long line of boats in the slow canal that carried water from the Brenta, and he thought about the long stretch of the Brenta where the great villas were, with their lawns and their gardens and the plane trees and the cypresses. I'd like to be buried out there, he thought. I know the place very well. I don't believe you could fix it, though. I don't know. I know some people that might let me be buried on their place. I'll ask Alberto. He might think it was morbid, though.

For a long time he had been thinking about all the fine places he

would like to be buried and what parts of the earth he would like to be a part of. The stinking, putrefying part doesn't last very long, really, he thought, and anyway you are just a sort of mulch, and even the bones will be some use finally. I'd like to be buried way out at the edge of the grounds, but in sight of the old graceful house and the tall, great trees. I don't think it would be much of a nuisance to them. I could be a part of the ground where the children play in the evenings, and in the mornings, maybe, they would still be training jumping horses and their hoofs would make the thudding on the turf, and trout would rise in the pool when there was a hatch of fly.

They were up on the causeway from Mestre to Venice now with the ugly Breda works that might have been Hammond, Indiana.

"What do they make there, sir?" Jackson asked.

"The company makes locomotives in Milan," the Colonel said. "Here they make a little of everything in the metallurgic line."

It was a miserable view of Venice now and he always disliked this causeway except that you made such good time and you could see the buoys and the channels.

"This town makes a living on its own," he said to Jackson. "She used to be the queen of the seas and the people are very tough and they give less of a good goddamn about things than almost anybody you'll ever meet. It's a tougher town than Cheyenne when you really know it, and everybody is very polite."

"I wouldn't say Cheyenne was a tough town, sir."

"Well, it's a tougher town than Casper."

"Do you think that's a tough town, sir?"

"It's an oil town. It's a nice town."

"But I don't think it's tough, sir. Or ever was."

"O.K., Jackson. Maybe we move in different circles. Or maybe we have a differing definition for the word. But this town of Venice, with everybody being polite and having good manners, is as tough as Cooke City, Montana, on the day they have the Old Timers' Fish

Fry."

"My idea of a tough town is Memphis."

"Not like Chicago, Jackson. Memphis is only tough if you are a Negro. Chicago is tough North, South, there isn't any East, and West. But nobody has any manners. But in this country, if you ever want to know a really tough town where they eat wonderfully too, go to Bologna."

"I never was there."

"Well, there's the Fiat garage where we leave the car," the Colonel said. "You can leave the key at the office. They don't steal. I'll go in the bar while you park upstairs. They have people that will bring the bags."

"Is it okay to leave your gun and shooting gear in the trunk, sir?"

"Sure. They don't steal here. I told you that once."

"I wanted to take the necessary precaution, sir, on your valuable property."

"You're so damned noble that sometimes you stink," the Colonel said. "Get the wax out of your ears and hear what I say the first time."

"I heard you, sir," Jackson said. The Colonel looked at him contemplatively and with the old deadliness.

He sure is a mean son of a bitch, Jackson thought, and he can be so goddamn nice.

"Get my and your bag out and park her up there and check your oil, your water and your tires," the Colonel said, and walked across the oil and rubber stained cement of the entry of the bar.

Chapter VI

In the bar, sitting at the first table as he came in, there was a post-war rich from Milan, fat and hard as only Milanese can be, sitting with his expensive looking and extremely desirable mistress. They were drinking negronis, a combination of two sweet vermouths and seltzer water, and the Colonel wondered how much taxes the man had escaped to buy that sleek girl in her long mink coat and the convertible he had seen the chauffeur take up the long, winding ramp, to lock away. The pair stared at him with the bad manners of their kind and he saluted, lightly, and said to them in Italian, “I am sorry that I am in uniform. But it is a uniform. Not a costume.”

Then he turned his back on them, without waiting to see the effect of his remark, and walked to the bar. From the bar you could watch your luggage, just as well as the two *pescecani* were watching theirs.

He is probably a Commendatore, he thought. She is a beautiful, hard piece of work. She is damned beautiful, actually. I wonder what it would have been like if I had ever had the money to buy me that kind and put them into the mink? I’ll settle for what I have, he thought, and they can go and hang themselves.

The bartender shook hands with him. This bartender was an Anarchist but he did not mind the Colonel being a Colonel at all. He was delighted by it and proud and loving about it as though the Anarchists had a Colonel, too, and in some ways, in the several months that they had known each other, he seemed to feel that he had invented, or at least, erected the Colonel as you might be happy about participating in the erection of a *campanile,* or even the old

church at Torcello.

The bartender had heard the conversation, or, rather, the flat statement at the table and he was very happy.

He had already sent down, via the dumbwaiter, for a Gordon's gin and Campari and he said, "It is coming up in that hand-pulled device. How does everything go at Trieste?"

"About as you would imagine."

"I couldn't even imagine."

"Then don't strain," the Colonel said, "and you will never get piles."

"I wouldn't mind it if I was a Colonel"

"I never mind it."

"You'd be overrun like a dose of salts," the waiter said.

"Don't tell the Honorable Pacciardi," the Colonel said. He and the bartender had a joke about this because the Honorable Pacciardi was Minister of Defense in the Italian Republic. He was the same age as the Colonel and had fought very well in the first world war, and had also fought in Spain as a battalion Commander where the Colonel had known him when he, himself, was an observer. The seriousness with which the Honorable Pacciardi took the post of Minister of Defense of an indefensible country was a bond between the Colonel and the bartender. The two of them were quite practical men and the vision of the Honorable Pacciardi defending the Italian Republic stimulated their minds.

"It's sort of funny up there," the Colonel said, "and I don't mind it."

"We must mechanize the Honorable Pacciardi," the bartender said. "And supply him with the atomic bomb."

"I've got three of them in the back of the car," the Colonel said. "The new model, complete with handles. But we can't leave him unarmed. We must supply him with botulism and anthrax."

"We cannot fail the Honorable Pacciardi," the bartender said. "Better to live one day as a lion than a hundred years as a sheep."

“Better to die on our feet than to live on our knees,” the Colonel said. “Though you better get on your belly damn fast if you want to stay alive in plenty places.”

“Colonel, do not say anything subversive.”

“We will strangle them with our bare hands,” the Colonel said. “A million men will spring to arms overnight.”

“Whose arms?” the bartender asked.

“All that will be attended to,” the Colonel said. “It’s only a phase in the Big Picture.”

Just then the driver came in the door. The Colonel saw that while they had been joking, he had not watched the door and he was annoyed, always, with any lapse of vigilance or of security.

“What the hell’s been keeping you, Jackson? Have a drink.”

“No, thank you, sir.”

You prissy jerk, the Colonel thought. But I better stop riding him, he corrected.

“We’ll be going in a minute,” the Colonel said. “I’ve been trying to learn Italian from my friend here.” He turned to look at the Milan profiteers; but they were gone.

I’m getting awfully slow, he thought. Somebody will take me any day now. Maybe even the Honorable Pacciardi, he thought.

“How much do I owe you?” he asked the bartender shortly.

The bartender told him and looked at him with his wise Italian eyes, not merry now, although the lines of merriment were clearly cut where they radiated from the corners of each eye. I hope there is nothing wrong with him, the bartender thought. I hope to God, or anything else, there’s nothing really bad.

“Good-bye, my Colonel,” he said.

“*Ciao,*” the Colonel said. “Jackson, we are going down the long ramp and due north from the exit to where the small launches are moored. The varnished ones. There is a porter with the two bags. It is necessary to let them carry them since they have a concession.”

“Yes, sir,” said Jackson.

The two of them went out the door and no one looked back at anyone.

At the *imbarcadero,* the Colonel tipped the man who had carried their two bags and then looked around for a boatman he knew.

He did not recognize the man in the launch that was first on call, but the boatman said, "Good day, my Colonel. I'm the first."

"How much is it to the Gritti?"

"You know as well as I, my Colonel. We do not bargain. We have a fixed tariff."

"What's the tariff?"

"Three thousand five hundred."

"We could go on the vaporetto for sixty."

"And nothing prevents you going," the boatman, who was an elderly man with a red but un-choleric face, said. "They won't take you to the Gritti but they will stop at the imbarcadero past Harry's, and you can telephone for someone from the Gritti to get your bags."

And what would I buy with the goddamn three thou-sand five hundred lire; and this is a good old man.

"Do you want me to send that man there?" he pointed to a destroyed old man who did odd jobs and ran errands around the docks, always ready with the un-needed aid to the elbow of the ascending or descending passenger, always ready to help when no help was needed, his old felt hat held out as he bowed after the un-needed act. "He'll take you to the vaporetto. There's one in twenty minutes."

"The hell with it," the Colonel said. "Take us to the Gritti."

"*Con piacere,*" the boatman said.

The Colonel and Jackson lowered themselves into the launch which looked like a speed boat. It was radiantly varnished and lovingly kept and was powered with a marine conversion of a tiny Fiat engine that had served its allotted time in the car of a provincial doctor and had been purchased out of one of the

graveyards of automobiles, those mechanical elephant cemeteries that are the one certain thing you may find in our world near any populated center, and been reconditioned and reconverted to start this new life on the canals of this city.

"How is the motor doing?" the Colonel asked. He could hear her sounding like a stricken tank or T.D., except the noises were in miniature from the lack of power.

"So-so," the boatman said. He moved his free hand in a parallel motion.

"You ought to get the smallest model Universal puts out. That's the best and lightest small marine engine I know."

"Yes," the boatman said. "There are quite a few things I should get."

"Maybe you'll have a good year."

"It's always possible. Lots of *pescecani* come down from Milano to gamble at the Lido. But nobody would ride twice in this thing on purpose. As a boat, it is fine, too. It is a well built, pleasant boat. Not beautiful as a gondola is, of course. But it needs an engine."

"I might get you a jeep engine. One that was condemned and you could work it over."

"Don't talk about such things," the boatman said. "Things like that don't happen. I don't want to think about it."

"You can think about it," the Colonel said. "I'm talking true."

"You mean it."

"Sure. I don't guarantee anything. I'll see what I can do. How many children have you got?"

"Six. Two male and four female."

"Hell, you mustn't have believed in the Regime. Only six."

"I *didn't* believe in the Regime."

"You don't have to give me that stuff," the Colonel said. "It would have been quite natural for you to *have* believed in it. Do you think I hold that against a man after we've won?"

They were through the dull part of the canal that runs from

Piazzale Roma to Ca'Foscari, though none of it is dull, the Colonel thought.

It doesn't all have to be palaces nor churches. Certainly that isn't dull. He looked to the right, the starboard, he thought. I'm on the water. It was a long low pleasant building and there was a trattoria next to it.

I ought to live here. On retirement pay I could make it all right. No Gritti Palace. A room in a house like that and the tides and the boats going by. I could read in the mornings and walk around town before lunch and go every day to see the Tintorettos at the Accademia and to the Scuola San Rocco and eat in good cheap joints behind the market, or, maybe, the woman that ran the house would cook in the evenings.

I think it would be better to have lunch out and get some exercise walking. It's a good town to walk in. I guess the best, probably. I never walked in it that it wasn't fun. I could learn it really well, he thought, and then I'd have that.

It's a strange, tricky town and to walk from any part to any other given part of it is better than working crossword puzzles. It's one of the few things to our credit that we never smacked it, and to *their* credit that they respected it.

Christ, I love it, he said, and I'm so happy I helped defend it when I was a punk kid, and with an insufficient command of the language and 1 never even saw her until that clear day in the winter when I went back to have that small wound dressed, and saw her rising from the sea. Merde, he thought, we did very well that winter up at the juncture.

I wish I could fight it again, he thought. Knowing what I know now and having what we have now. But they'd have it too and the essential problem is just the same, except who holds the air.

And all this time he had been watching the bow of the beat-up beautifully varnished, delicately brass-striped boat, with the brass all beautifully polished, cut the brown water, and seen the small

traffic problems.

They went under the white bridge and under the un-finished wood bridge. Then they left the red bridge on the right and passed under the first high-flying white bridge. Then there was the black iron fretwork bridge on the canal leading into the Rio Nuovo and they passed the two stakes chained together but not touching: like us the Colonel thought. He watched the tide pull at them and he saw how the chains had worn the wood since he first had seen them. That's us, he thought. That's our monument. And how many monuments are there to us in the canals of this town?

Then they still went slowly until the great lantern that was on the right of the entrance to the Grand Canal where the engine commenced its metallic agony that produced a slight increase in speed.

Now they came down and under the Accademia between the pilings where they passed, at touching distance, a heavily loaded black, diesel boat full of cut timber, cut in chunks, to burn for firewood in the damp houses of the Sea City.

"That's beech, isn't it?" the Colonel asked the boatman.

"Beech and another wood that is cheaper that I do not recall, at this moment, the name of."

"Beech is, to an open fire, as anthracite coal is to a stove. Where do they cut that beech?"

"I'm not a man of the mountains. But I think it comes from up beyond Bassano on the other side of the Grappa. I went there to the Grappa to see where my brother was buried. It was an excursion that they made from Bassano, and we went to the big ossario. But we returned by Feltre. I could see it was a fine timber country on the other side as you came down the mountains into the valley. We came down that military road, and they were hauling lots of wood."

"In what year was your brother killed on Grappa?"

"In nineteen-eighteen. He was a patriot and inflamed by hearing d'Annunzio talk, and he volunteered before his class was called. We

never knew him very well because he went so quickly."

"How many were you in the family?"

"We were six. We lost two beyond the Isonzo, one on the Bainsizza and one on the Carso. Then we lost this brother I speak of on the Grappa and I remained."

"I'll get you the goddamned jeep complete with handles," the Colonel said. "Now let's not be morbid and look for all the places where my friends live."

They were moving up the Grand Canal now and it was easy to see where your friends lived.

"That's the house of the Contessa Dandolo," the Colonel said.

He did not say, but thought, she is over eighty, and she is as gay as a girl and does not have any fear of dying. She dyes her hair red and it looks very well. She is a good companion and an admirable woman.

Her *palazzo* was pleasant looking, set well back from the Canal with a garden in front and a landing place of its own where many gondolas had come, in their various times, bringing hearty, cheerful, sad and disillusioned people. But most of them had been cheerful because they were going to see the Contessa Dandolo.

Now, beating up the Canal, against the cold wind off the mountains, and with the houses as clear and sharp as on a winter day, which, of course, it was, they saw the old magic of the city and its beauty. But it was conditioned, for the Colonel, by his knowing many of the people who lived in the palazzos; or if no one lived there now, knowing to what use the different places had been put.

There's Alvarito's mother's house, he thought, and did not say.

She never lives there much and stays out at the country house near Treviso where they have trees. She's tired of there not being trees in Venice. She lost a fine man and nothing really interests her now except efficiency.

But the family at one time lent the house to George Gordon, Lord Byron, and nobody sleeps now in Byron's bed nor in the other

bed, two flights below, where he used to sleep with the gondolier's wife. They are not sacred, nor relics. They are just extra beds that were not used afterwards for various reasons, or possibly to respect Lord Byron who was well loved in this town, in spite of all the errors he committed. You have to be a tough boy in this town to be loved, the Colonel thought. They never cared anything for Robert Browning, nor Mrs. Robert Browning, nor for their dog. They weren't Venetians no matter how well he wrote of it. And what is a tough boy, he asked himself. You use it so loosely you should be able to define it. I suppose it is a man who will make his play and then backs it up. Or just a man who backs his play. And I'm not thinking of the theatre, he thought. Lovely as the theatre can be.

And yet, he thought, seeing now the little villa, close up against the water, ugly as a building you would see on the boat train from Havre or Cherbourg, coming into the banlieue before Paris as you came into town. It was overrun with badly administered trees, and not a place that you would live in if you could help it. There *he* lived.

They loved him for his talent, and because he was bad, and he was brave. A Jewish boy with nothing, he stormed the country with his talent, and his rhetoric. He was a more miserable character than any that I know and as mean. But the man I think of to compare him with never put the chips on the line and went to war, the Colonel thought, and Gabriele d' Annunzio (I always wondered what his real name was, he thought, because nobody is named d'Annunzio in a practical country and perhaps he was not Jewish and what difference did it make if he was or was not.) had moved through the different arms of the service as he had moved into and out of the arms of different women.

All the arms were pleasant that d'Annunzio served with and the mission was fast and easily over, except the Infantry. He remembered how d'Annunzio had lost an eye in a crash, flying as an observer, over Trieste or Pola, and how, afterwards, he had

always worn a patch over it and people who did not know, for, then, no one really knew, thought it had been shot out at the Veliki or San Michele or some other bad place beyond the Carso where everyone died, or was incapacitated, that you knew. But d'Annunzio, truly, was only making heroic gestures with the other things. An Infantryman knows a strange trade, he thought; perhaps the strangest. He, Gabriele, flew, but he was not a flier. He was in the Infantry but he was not an Infantryman and it was always the same appearances.

And the Colonel remembered one time when he had stood, commanding a platoon of assault troops, while it was raining in one of the interminable winters, when the rain fell always; or at least, always when there were parades or speeches to the troops, and d'Annunzio, with his lost eye, covered by the patch, and his white face, as white as the belly of a sole, new turned over in the market, the brown side not showing, and looking thirty hours dead, was shouting, "Morire non è basta," and the Colonel, then a lieutenant, had thought, "What the muck more do they want of us?"

But he had followed the discourse and, at the end, when the Lieutenant Colonel d'Annunzio, writer and national hero, certified and true if you must have heroes, and the Colonel did not believe in heroes, asked for a moment of silence for our glorious dead, he had stood stiffly at attention. But his platoon, who had not followed the speech, there being no loud speakers then, and they being slightly out of hearing of the orator, responded, as one man, at the pause for the moment of silence for our glorious dead, with a solid and ringing "*Evviva d'Annunzio,*"

They had been addressed before by d'Annunzio after victories, and before defeats, and they knew what they should shout if there was any pause by an orator.

The Colonel, being then a lieutenant, and loving his platoon, had joined with them and uttered, with the tone of command, "*Evviva d'Annunzio,*" thus absolving all those who had not listened

to the discourse, speech, or harangue, and attempting, in the small way a lieutenant can attempt anything, except to hold an indefensible position, or intelligently direct his own part in an attack, to share their guilt.

But now he was passing the house where the poor beat-up old boy had lived with his great, sad, and never properly loved actress, and he thought of her wonderful hands, and her so transformable face, that was not beautiful, but that gave you all love, glory, and delight and sad-ness; and of the way the curve of her forearm could break your heart, and he thought, Christ they are dead and I do not know where either one is buried even. But I certainly hope they had fun in that house.

"Jackson," he said, "that small villa on the left belonged to Gabriele d'Annunzio, who was a great writer."

"Yes, sir," said Jackson, "I'm glad to know about him. I never heard of him."

"I'll check you out on what he wrote if you ever want to read him," the Colonel said. "There are some fair English translations."

"Thank you, sir," said Jackson. "I'd like to read him anytime I have time. He has a nice practical looking place. What did you say the name was?"

"D'Annunzio," the Colonel said. "Writer."

He added to himself, not wishing to confuse Jackson, nor be difficult, as he had been with the man several times that day, writer, poet, national hero, phraser of the dialectic of Fascism, macabre egotist, aviator, commander, or rider, in the first of the fast torpedo attack boats, Lieutenant Colonel of Infantry without knowing how to command a company, nor a platoon properly, the great, lovely writer of *Notturno* whom we respect, and jerk.

Up ahead now there was a crossing place of gondolas at the Santa Maria del Giglio and, beyond, was the wooden dock of the Gritti.

"That's the hotel where we are stopping at, Jackson."

The Colonel indicated the three story, rose colored, small, pleasant palace abutting on the Canal. It had been a dependence of the Grand Hotel—but now it was its own hotel and a very good one. It was probably the best hotel, if you did not wish to be fawned on, or fussed over, or over-flunkied, in a city of great hotels, and the Colonel loved it.

"It looks O.K. to me, sir," Jackson said.

"It is O.K.," the Colonel said.

The motor boat came gallantly up beside the piling of the dock. Every move she makes, the Colonel thought, is a triumph of the gallantry of the aging machine. We do not have war horses now like old Traveller, or Marbot's Lysette who fought, personally, at Eylau. We have the gallantry of worn-through rods that refuse to break; the cylinder head that does not blow though it has every right to, and the rest of it.

"We're at the dock, sir," Jackson said.

"Where the hell else would we be, man. Jump out while I settle with this sportsman."

He turned to the boatman and said, "That was thirty five hundred, wasn't it?"

"Yes, my Colonel."

"I'll not forget about the over-age jeep engine. Take this and buy your horse some oats."

The porter, who was taking the bags from Jackson, heard this and laughed.

"No veterinarian will ever fix his horse."

"She still runs," the boatman said.

"But she doesn't win any races," the porter said. "How are you, my Colonel?"

"I couldn't be better," the Colonel said. "How are all the members of the Order?"

"All members are well."

"Good," said the Colonel. "I will go in and see the Grand

Master."

"He is waiting for you, my Colonel."

"Let us not keep him waiting, Jackson," the Colonel said. "You may proceed to the lobby with this gentleman and tell them to sign me in. See the sergeant gets a room," he said to the porter. "We're here for the night only."

"The Baron Alvarito was here looking for you."

"I'll find him at Harry's."

"Good, my Colonel."

"Where is the Grand Master?"

"I'll find him for you."

"Tell him I'll be in the bar."

Chapter VII

The bar was just across from the lobby of the Gritti, although lobby, the Colonel thought, was not the accurate term to describe that gracious entrance. Didn't Giotto describe a circle, he thought? No, that was in math. What he remembered and loved best as an anecdote about that painter was: "It was easy," said Giotto as he drew the perfect circle. Who the hell had said that and where?

"Good evening, Privy Counsellor," he said to the barman, who was not a full paid-up member of the order but whom he did not wish to offend. "What can I do for you?"

"Drink, my Colonel."

The Colonel looked out of the windows and the door of the bar onto the waters of the Grand Canal. He could see the big black hitching post for the gondolas and the late afternoon winter light on the wind-swept water. Across the Canal was the old Palace and a wood barge, black and broad, was coming up the Canal, her bluff bows pushing up a wave even though she had the wind behind her.

"Make it a very dry Martini:' the Colonel said. "A double."

Just then the Grand Master came into the room. He was wearing his formal attire as a head waiter. He was truly handsome as a man should be, from the inside out, so that his smile starts from his heart, or whatever is the center of the body, and comes frankly and beautifully to the surface, which is the face.

He had a fine face with the long, straight nose of his part of the Veneto; the kind, gay, truthful eyes and the honorable white hair of his age, which was two years older than that of the Colonel.

He advanced smiling, lovingly, and yet conspiratorially, since

they both shared many secrets, and he extended his hand, which was a big, long, strong, spatular fingered hand; well-kept as was becoming, as well as necessary, to his position, and the Colonel extended his own hand, which had been shot through twice, and was slightly misshapen. Thus contact was made between two old inhabitants of the Veneto, both men, and brothers in their membership in the human race, the only club that either one paid dues to, and brothers, too, in their love of an old country, much fought over, and always triumphant in defeat, which they had both defended in their youth.

Their handshake was only long enough to feel, firmly, the contact and the pleasure of meeting and then the *Maitre d'Hotel* said, "My Colonel."

The Colonel said, "*Gran Maestro.*"

Then the Colonel asked the *Gran Maestro* to accompany him in a drink, but the *Maitre d' Hotel* said that he was working. It was impossible as well as forbidden.

"Fornicate forbidden," said the Colonel.

"Of course," the *Gran Maestro* said. "But everyone must comply with his duty, and here the rules are reasonable, and we all should comply with them; me especially, as a matter of precept."

"Not for nothing are you the *Gran Maestro,*" the Colonel said.

"Give me a small *Carpano punto e mezzo,*" the *Gran Maestro* said to the bartender, who was still outside of the Order for some small, not defined, unstated reason. "To drink to the *ordine.*"

Thus, violating orders and the principle of precept and example in command, the Colonel and the *Gran Maestro* downed a quick one. They did not hurry nor did the *Gran Maestro* worry. They simply made it fast.

"Now, let us discuss the affairs of the Order," the Colonel said. "Are we in the secret chamber?"

"We are," said the *Gran Maestro.* "Or I declare it to be such."

"Continue," said the Colonel.

The order, which was a purely fictitious organization, had been founded in a series of conversations between the *Gran Maestro* and the Colonel. Its name was *El Ordine Militar, Nobile y Espiruuoso de los Caballeros de Brusadelli.* The Colonel and the head waiter both spoke Span-ish, and since that is the best language for founding orders. they had used it in the naming of this one, which was named after a particularly notorious multi-millionaire non-taxpaying profiteer of Milan, who had, in the course of a dispute over property, accused his young wife, publicly and legally through due process of law, of having deprived him of his judgment through her extraordinary sexual demands.

"*Gran Maestro,*" the Colonel said. "Have you heard from our Leader, *The Revered One?*"

"Not a word. He is silent these days."

"He must be thinking."

"He must."

"Perhaps he is meditating on new and more distinguished shameful acts."

"Perhaps. He has not given me any word."

"But we can have confidence in him."

"Until he dies," the *Gran Maestro* said. "After that he can roast in hell and we will revere his memory."

"Giorgio," the Colonel said. "Give the *Gran Maestro* another short *Carpano.*"

"If it is your order," the *Gran Maestro* said, "I can only obey."

They touched glasses.

"Jackson," the Colonel called. "You're on the town. You can sign here for chow. I don't want to see you until eleven hundred tomorrow in the lobby, unless you get into trouble. Do you have money?"

"Yes, sir," Jackson said and thought, the old son of a bitch really *is* as crazy as they say. But he might have called me instead of shouting.

“I don’t want to see you,” the Colonel said.

Jackson had entered the room and stood before him at a semblance of attention.

“I’m tired of seeing you, because you worry and you don’t have fun. For Christ sake have yourself some fun.”

“Yes, sir.”

“You understand what I said?” “Yes, sir.”

“Repeat it.”

“Ronald Jackson, TS Serial Number 100678, will present himself in the lobby of this Gritti Hotel at 1100 tomorrow morning, I don’t know the date, sir, and will absent himself from the Colonel’s sight and will have some fun. Or,” he added, “will make every reasonable attempt to attain that objective.”

“I’m sorry, Jackson,” the Colonel said. “I’m a shit.”

“I beg to differ with the Colonel,” Jackson said.

“Thank you, Jackson,” the Colonel told him. “Maybe I’m not. I hope you are correct. Now muck off. You’ve got a room here, or you should have, and you can sign for chow. Now try and have some fun.”

“Yes, sir,” said Jackson.

When he was gone, the *Gran Maestro* said to the Colonel, “What is the boy? One of those *sad* Americans?”

“Yes,” the Colonel said. “And by Jesus Christ we’ve got a lot of them. Sad, self-righteous, over-fed and under-trained. If they are under-trained, it is my fault. But we’ve got some good ones, too.”

“Do you think they would have done Grappa, Pasubio and the Basso Piave as we did?”

“The good ones, yes. Maybe better. But you know, in our army, they don’t even shoot for self-inflicted wounds.”

“Jesus,” said the *Gran Maestro.* He and the Colonel both remembered the men who decided that they did not wish to die; not thinking that he who dies on Thursday does not have to die on Friday, and how one soldier would wrap another’s putteed leg in a

sandbag so there would be no powder burns, and loose off at his friend from as far a distance as he figured he could hit the calf of the leg without hitting bone, and then fire twice over the parapet to alibi the shot. They had this knowledge shared between them and it was for this reason and for a true, good hatred of all those who profited by war that they had founded the Order.

They knew, the two of them, who loved and respected each other, how *poor* boys who did not want to die, would share the contents of a match box full of gonorrheal pus to produce the infection that would keep them from the next murderous frontal attack.

They knew about the other boys who put the big ten centime pieces under their armpits to produce jaundice. And they knew, too, about the richer boys who, in different cities, had paraffin injected under their kneecaps so they would not have to go to the war.

They knew how garlic could be used to produce certain effects which could absent a man from an attack, and they knew all, or nearly all, of the other tricks; for one had been a sergeant and the other a lieutenant of infantry and they had fought on the three key points, Pasubio, Grappa, and the Piave, where it all made sense.

They had fought, too, in the earlier stupid butchery on the Isonzo and the Carso. But they were both ashamed of those who had ordered that, and they never thought about it except as a shameful, stupid thing to be forgotten and the Colonel remembered it technically as something to learn from. So, now, they had founded the Order of Brusadelli; noble, military and religious, and there were only five members.

"What is the news of the Order?" the Colonel asked the *Gran Maestro.*

"We have ascended the cook at the Magnificent to the rank of Commendatore. He comported himself as a man three times on his fiftieth birthday. I accepted his statement without corroboration. He never lied ever."

"No. He never lied. But it is a topic on which you must be chary in your credibility."

"I believed him. He looked ruined."

"I can remember him when he was a tough kid and we called him the cherry buster."

"*Anch' io.*"

"Have you any concrete plans for the Order during the Winter?"

"No, Supreme Commander."

"Do you think we should give a homage to the Honorable Pacciardi? "

"As you wish."

"Let's defer it," the Colonel said. He thought a moment, and signalled for another dry Martini.

"Do you think we might organize a homage and manifestation in some historic place such as San Marco or the old church at Torcello in favor of our Great Patron, Brusadelli, the Revered One?"

"I doubt if the religious authorities would permit it at this moment."

"Then let us abandon all ideas of public manifestations for this winter, and work within our cadres, for the good of the Order."

"I think that is soundest," the *Gran Maestro* said. "We will regroup."

"And how are you, yourself?"

"Awful," the *Gran Maestro* said. "I have low blood pressure, ulcers, and I owe money."

"Are you happy?"

"All the time," the *Gran Maestro* said. "I like my work very much, and I meet extraordinary and interesting characters, also many Belgians. They are what we have instead of the locusts this year. Formerly we had the Germans. What was it Caesar said, 'And the bravest of these are the Belgians.' But not the best dressed. Do you agree?"

"I've seen them quite well costumed in Brussels," the Colonel

said. “A well fed, gay capital. Win, lose, or draw. I have never seen them fight though everyone tells me that they do.”

“We should have fought in Flanders in the old days.”

“We were not born in the old days,” the Colonel said. “So we automatically could not have fought then.”

“I wish we could have fought with the Condottieri when all you had to do was outthink them and they conceded. You could think and I would convey your orders.”

“We’d have to take a few towns for them to respect our thinking.”

“We would sack them if they defended them,” the *Gran Maestro* said. “What towns would you take?”

“Not this one,” the Colonel said. “I’d take Vicenza, Bergamo and Verona. Not necessarily in that order.”

“You’d have to take two more.”

“I know,” the Colonel said. He was a general now again, and he was happy. “I figured that I’d bypass Brescia. It could fall of its own weight.”

“And how are you, Supreme Commander?” the *Gran Maestro* said, for this taking of towns had pulled him out of his depth.

He was at home in his small house in Treviso, close to the fast flowing river under the old walls. The weeds waved in the current and the fish hung in the shelter of the weeds and rose to insects that touched the water in the dusk. He was at home, too, in all operations that did not involve more than a company, and understood them as clearly as he understood the proper serving of a small dining room; or a large dining room.

But when the Colonel became a general officer again, as he had once been, and thought in terms that were as far beyond him as calculus is distant from a man who has only the knowledge of arithmetic, then he was not at home, and their contact was strained, and he wished the Colonel would return to things they both knew together when they were a lieutenant and a sergeant.

"What would you do about Mantova?" the Colonel asked.

"I do not know, my Colonel. I do not know whom you are fighting, nor what forces they have, nor what forces are at your disposal."

"I thought you said we were Condottieri. Based on this town or on Padova."

"My Colonel," the *Gran Maestro* said, and he had diminished in no way, "I know nothing, truly, about Condottieri. Nor really how they fought then. I only said I would like to fight under you in such times."

"There aren't any such times anymore," the Colonel said and the spell was broken.

What the hell, maybe there never was any spell, the Colonel thought. The hell with you, he said to himself. Cut it out and be a human being when you're half a hundred years old.

"Have another *Carpano,*" he said to the *Gran Maestro.*

"My Colonel, you will allow me to refuse because of the ulcers?"

"Yes. Yes. Of course. Boy, what's your name, Giorgio? Another dry Martini. *Secco, molto secco e doppio.*"

Breaking spells, he thought. It is not my trade. My trade is killing armed men. A spell should be armed if I'm to break it. But we have killed manythings which were not armed. All right, spell breaker, retract.

"*Gran Maestro,*" he said. "You are still *Gran Maestro* and fornicate the Condottieri."

"They were fornicated many years ago, Supreme Commander."

"Exactly," the Colonel said.

But the spell was broken.

"I'll see you at dinner," the Colonel said. "What is there?"

"We will have anything you wish, and what we do not have I will send out for."

"Do you have any fresh asparagus?"

"You know we cannot have it in these months. It comes in April

and from Bassano."

"Then I'll just urinate the usual odor," the Colonel said. "You think of something and I'll eat it."

"How many will you be?" the Maitre d'Hotel asked.

"We'll be two," the Colonel said. "What time do you dose the *bistro?*"

"We will serve dinner as late as you wish to eat, my Colonel."

"I'll try to be in at a sound hour," the Colonel said. "Good-bye, *Gran Maestro,*" he said and smiled, and gave the *Gran Maestro* his crooked hand.

"Good-bye, Supreme Commander," said the *Gran Maestro* and the spell was existent again and almost complete.

But it was not quite complete and the Colonel knew it and he thought: why am I always a bastard and why can I not suspend this trade of arms, and be a kind and good man as I would have wished to be.

I try always to be just, but I am brusque and I am brutal. and it is not that I have erected the defense against brown-nosing my superiors and brown-nosing the world. I should be a better man with less wild boar blood in the small time which remains. We will try it out tonight, he thought. With whom, he thought, and where, and God help me not to be bad.

"Giorgio," he said to the barman, who had a face as white as a leper, but with no bulges, and without the silver shine.

Giorgio did not really like the Colonel very much, or perhaps he was simply from Piemonte, and cared for no one truly; which was understandable in cold people from a border province. Borderers are not trusters, and the Colonel knew about this, and expected nothing from anyone that they did not have to give.

"Giorgio," he said to the pale-faced barman. "Write these down for me, please."

He went out, walking as he had always walked, with a slightly exaggerated confidence, even when it was not needed, and, in his

always renewed plan of being kind, decent and good, he greeted the concierge, who was a friend, the assistant manager, who spoke Swahili and had been a prisoner of war in Kenya, and was a most amiable man, young, full of juice, handsome, perhaps not yet a member of the Order, and experienced.

"And the *cavaliere ufficiale* who manages this place?" he asked. "My friend?"

"He is not here," the assistant manager said. "For the moment, naturally," he added.

"Give him my compliments," the Colonel said. "And have somebody show me to my room."

"It is the usual room. You still wish it?"

"Yes. Have you taken care of the Sergeant?"

"He is well taken care of."

"Good," said the Colonel.

The Colonel proceeded to his room accompanied by the boy who carried his bag.

"This way, my Colonel," the boy said, when the elevator halted with slight hydraulic inaccuracy at the top floor.

"Can't you run an elevator properly?" the Colonel asked.

"No, my Colonel," the boy said. "The current is not stable."

Chapter VIII

The Colonel said nothing and preceded the boy down the corridor. It was large, wide and high ceilinged, and there was a long and distinguished interval between the doors of the rooms on the side of the Grand Canal. Naturally, since it had been a palace, there were no rooms without excellent views, except those which had been made for the servants.

The Colonel found the walk long, although it was a very short one, and when the waiter who served the room appeared, short, dark and with his glass eye in the left eye socket gleaming, unable to smile his full, true smile as he worked the big key in the lock, the Colonel wished that the door would open more rapidly.

"Open it up," he said.

"I will, my Colonel," the waiter said. "But you know these locks."

Yes, the Colonel thought. I know them, but I wish that he would get it open.

"How are your family?" he said to the waiter, who had swung the door wide so that the Colonel, now entered, was within the room with the high, dark but well-mirrored armoire, the two good beds, the great chandelier and the view, through the still closed windows, onto the wind beaten water of the Grand Canal.

The Canal was grey as steel now in the quick, failing, winter light and the Colonel said, "Arnaldo, open the windows."

"There is much wind, my Colonel, and the room is badly heated due to the lack of electric power."

"Due to the lack of rainfall," the Colonel said. "Open the

windows. All of them."

"As you wish, my Colonel."

The waiter opened the windows and the north wind came into the room.

"Please call the desk and ask them to ring this number." The waiter made the call while the Colonel was in the bathroom.

"The Contessa is not at home, my Colonel," he said. "They believe you might find her at Harry's."

"You find everything on earth at Harry's."

"Yes, my Colonel. Except, possibly, happiness."

"I'll damn well find happiness, too," the Colonel assured him. "Happiness, as you know, is a movable feast."

"I am aware of that," the waiter said. "I have brought Campari bitters and a bottle of Gordon Gin. May I make you a Campari with gin and soda?"

"You're a good boy," the Colonel said. "Where did you bring them from. The bar?"

"No. I bought them while you were away so that you would not have to spend money at the bar. The bar is very costly."

"I agree," the Colonel agreed. "But you should not use your own money on such a project."

"I took a chance. We have both taken many. The gin was 3200 lire and is legitimate. The Campari was 800."

"You're a very good boy," the Colonel told him. "How were the ducks?"

"My wife still speaks of them. We had never had wild ducks, since they are of such expense, and outside of our way of life. But one of our neighbors told her how to prepare them and these same neighbors ate them with us. I never knew that anything could be so wonderful to eat. When your teeth close on the small slice of meat it is an almost unbelievable delight."

"I think so, too. There is nothing lovelier to eat than those fat iron-curtain ducks. You know their fly-way is through the great

grain fields of the Danube. This is a splinter flight we have here, but they always come the same way since before there were shotguns."

"I know nothing about shooting for sport," the waiter said. "We were too poor."

"But many people without money shoot in the Veneto."

"Yes. Of course. One hears them shoot all night. But we were poorer than that. We were poorer than you can know, my Colonel."

"I think I can know."

"Perhaps," the waiter said. "My wife also saved all the feathers and she asked me to thank you."

"If we have any luck day after tomorrow, we'll get plenty. The big ducks with the green heads. Tell your wife, with luck, there will be good eating ducks, fat as pigs with what they have eaten from the Russians, and with beautiful feathers:"

"How do you feel about the Russians, if it is not indiscreet to ask, my Colonel?"

"They are our potential enemy. So, as a soldier, I am prepared to fight them. But I like them very much and I have never known finer people nor people more as we are."

"I have never had the good fortune to know them."

"You will, boy. You will. Unless the Honorable Pacciardi stops them on the line of the Piave, which is a river which no longer contains water. It has been syphoned off for hydroelectric projects. Perhaps the Honorable Pacciardi will fight there. But I do not think he will fight for long."

"I do not know the Honorable Pacciardi."

"I know him," said the Colonel.

"Now ask them to ring Harry's and see if the Contessa is there. If not, have them ring the house again."

The Colonel took the drink Arnaldo, the glass-eyed waiter, made him. He did not want it, and he knew that it was bad for him.

But he took it with his old wild-boar truculence, as he had taken everything all of his life, and he moved, still cat-like when he

moved, although it was an old cat now, over to the open window and looked out on the great Canal which was now becoming as grey as though Degas had painted it on one of his greyest days.

"Thanks very much for the drink," the Colonel said, and Arnaldo, who was talking into the telephone, nodded and smiled his glass-eyed smile.

I wish he did not have to have that glass eye, the Colonel thought. He only loved people, he thought, who had fought or been mutilated.

Other people were fine and you liked them and were good friends; but you only felt true tenderness and love for those who had been there and had received the castigation that everyone receives who goes there long enough.

So I'm a sucker for crips, he thought, drinking the unwanted drink. And any son of a bitch who has been hit solidly, as every man will be if he stays, then I love him.

Yes, his other, good, side said. You love them.

I'd rather not love anyone, the Colonel thought. I'd rather have fun.

And fun, his good side said to him, you have no fun when you do not love.

All right. I love more than any son of the great bitch alive, the Colonel said, but not aloud.

Aloud, he said, "Where are you getting on that call, Arnaldo?"

"Cipriani has not come in," the waiter said. "They are expecting him at any moment and I am keeping the line open in case he arrives."

"A costly procedure," the Colonel said. "Get me a reading on who's there so we don't waste time. I want to know exactly who is there."

Arnaldo spoke guardedly into the mouthpiece of the telephone.

He covered the mouth of the phone with his hand and said, "I am talking to Ettore. He says the Barone Alvarito is not there. The

Count Andrea is there and he is rather drunk, Ettore says, but not too drunk for you to have fun together. The group of ladies that comes in each afternoon are there and there is a Greek Princess, that you know, and several people that you do not know. Riffraff from the American Consulate who have stayed on since noon."

"Tell him to call back when the riffraff goes and I'll come over."

Arnaldo spoke into the phone, then turned to the Colonel who was looking out of the window at the Dome of the Dogana, "Ettore says he will try to move them, but he is afraid Cipriani will not like it."

"Tell him not to move them. They don't have to work this afternoon and there is no reason why they should not get drunk like any other man. I just don't want to see them."

"Ettore says he will call back. He told me to tell you he thinks the position will fall of its own weight."

"Thank him for calling," the Colonel said.

He watched a gondola working up the Canal against the wind and thought, not with Americans drinking. I know they are bored. In this town, too. They are bored in this town. I know the place is cold and their wages are inadequate and what fuel costs. I admire their wives, for the valiant efforts they make to transport Keokuk to Venice, and their children already speak Italian like little Venetians. But no snapshots today, Jack. Today we are giving the snapshots, the barroom confidences, the unwanted comradely drinks and the tedious woes of the Consular services a miss.

"No second, third or fourth vice-consuls today, Arnaldo."

"There are some very pleasant people from the Consulate."

"Yeah," the Colonel said. "They had a hell of a nice consul here in 1918. Everybody liked him. I'll try to remember his name."

"You go back a long way back, my Colonel.''

"I go back so damn far back that it isn't funny."

"Do you remember everything from the old days?"

"Everything," the Colonel said. "Carroll was the man's name."

“I have heard of him.”

“You weren’t born then.”

“Do you think it is necessary to have been born at the time to know about things that have happened in this town, my Colonel?”

“You’re perfectly correct. Tell me, does everybody always know about everything that happens in this town?”

“Not everybody. But nearly everybody,” the waiter said. “After all, sheets are sheets and someone has to change them, and someone has to wash them. Naturally I do not refer to the sheets in a hotel such as this.”

“I’ve had some damn good times in my life without sheets.”

“Naturally. But the gondoliers, while they are the most cooperative and, for me, the finest people that we have, speak among themselves.”

“Naturally.”

“Then the clergy. While they would never violate the secrecy of the confessional, talk among themselves.”

“It is to be expected.”

“Their housekeepers talk among themselves.”

“It is their right.”

“Then the waiters,” Arnaldo said. “People talk at a table as though the waiter were stone-deaf. The waiter, according to his ethics, makes no attempt to ever overhear a conversation. But sometimes he cannot escape from hearing. Naturally, we have our own conversations among ourselves. Never in this hotel of course. I could go on.”

“I believe I get the point.”

“Not to mention the coiffeurs and the hairdressers.”

“And what’s the news from the Rialto now?”

“You will get it all at Harry’s except the part you figure in.”

“Do I figure?”

“Everyone knows everything.”

“Well, it’s a damn pleasant story.”

"Some people don't understand the Torcello part."

"I'm damned if I do sometimes myself."

"How old are you, my Colonel, if it is not too indiscreet to ask?"

"Fifty plus one. Why didn't you find out from the concierge? I fill out a slip there for the Questura."

"I wanted to hear it from you yourself and to congratulate you."

"I don't know what you are talking about."

"Let me congratulate you anyway."

"I can't accept it."

"You are very well liked in this city."

"Thank you. That is a very great compliment."

Just then the telephone buzzed.

"I'll take it," the Colonel said and heard Ettore's voice say, "Who speaks?"

"Colonel Cantwell."

"The position has fallen, my Colonel."

"Which way did they go?"

"Toward the Piazza."

"Good. I will be there at once."

"Do you want a table?"

"In the comer," said the Colonel and hung up.

"I am off for Harry's."

"Good hunting."

"I hunt ducks day after tomorrow before first light in a *botte* in the marshes."

"It will be cold, too."

"I dare say," the Colonel said and put on his trench coat and looked at his face in the glass of the long mirror as he put on his cap.

"An ugly face," he said to the glass. "Did you ever see a more ugly face?"

"Yes," said Arnaldo. "Mine. Every morning when I shave."

"We both ought to shave in the dark," the Colonel told him, and

went out the door.

Chapter IX

As Colonel Cantwell stepped out of the door of the Gritti Palace Hotel he came out into the last sunlight of that day. There was still sunlight on the opposite side of the Square but the gondoliers preferred to be sheltered from the cold wind by lounging in the lee of the Gritti, than to use the last remaining heat of the sun on the wind-swept side of the Square.

After noting this, the Colonel turned to the right and walked along the Square to the paved street which turned off on the right. As he turned, he stopped for a moment and looked at the church of Santa Maria del Giglio.

What a fine, compact and, yet, ready to be airborne building, he thought. I never realized a small church could look like a P47. Must find out when it was built, and who built it. Damn, I wish I might walk around this town all my life. All my life, he thought. What a gag that is. A gag to gag on. A throttle to throttle you with. Come on, boy, he said to himself. No horse named Morbid ever won a race.

Besides, he thought, as he looked in the windows of the various shops he passed, the charcuterie with the Parmesan cheeses and the hams from San Daniele, and the sausages alIa cacciatora, and the bottles of good Scotch whisky and real Gordon's gin, the cutlery store, an antique dealer's with some good pieces and some old maps and prints, a second-rate restaurant disguised expensively as one of the first class, and then came to the first bridge crossing a feeder canal with steps to be climbed, I don't feel so badly. There is only the buzzing. I remember when that started and I thought perhaps it

was seven year locusts in the trees and I did not like to ask young Lowry but I did. And he answered, No, General, I don't hear any crickets or seven year locusts. The night is perfectly quiet except for the usual noises.

Then, as he climbed, he felt the twinges, and coming down the other side, he saw two lovely looking girls. They were beautiful and hatless and poorly but chicly dressed, and they were talking very fast to each other and the wind was blowing their hair as they climbed with their long, easy striding Venetian legs and the Colonel said to himself, I'd better quit window gazing along this street and make that next bridge, and two squares afterwards you turn due right and keep along it till you are in Harry's.

He did just that, twinging on the bridge, but walking with his same old stride and only seeing, quickly, the people that he passed. There's a lot of oxygen in this air, he thought, as he faced into the wind and breathed deeply.

Then he was pulling open the door of Harry's bar and was inside and he had made it again, and was at home.

At the bar a tall, very tall, man, with a ravaged face of great breeding, merry blue eyes, and the long, loose-coupled body of a buffalo wolf, said, "My ancient and depraved Colonel."

"My wicked Andrea."

They embraced and the Colonel felt the rough texture of Andrea's handsome tweed coat that must have been entering, at least, its twentieth year.

"You look well, Andrea," the Colonel said.

It was a lie and they both knew it.

"I am," said Andrea, returning the lie. "I must say I never felt better. You look extraordinarily well, yourself."

"Thank you, Andrea. Us healthy bastards shall inherit the earth."

"Very good idea. I must say I wouldn't mind inheriting something these days."

"You have no kick. You'll inherit well over six feet four of it."

“Six feet six,” said Andrea. “You wicked old man. Are you still slaving away at *la vie militaire?*”

“I don’t slave too hard at it,” the Colonel said. “I’m down to shoot at San Relajo.”

“I know. But don’t make jokes in Spanish at this hour. Alvarito was looking for you. He said to tell you he’d be back.”

“Good. Is your lovely wife and are the children well?”

“Absolutely, and they asked me to remember them to you if I saw you. They’re down in Rome. There comes your girl. Or one of your girls.” He was so tall he could see into the now almost dark street, but this was a girl you could recognize if it was much darker than it was at this hour.

“Ask her to have a drink with us here before you carry her off to that corner table. Isn’t she a lovely girl?”

“She is.”

Then she came into the room, shining in her youth and tall striding beauty, and the carelessness the wind had made of her hair. She had pale, almost olive colored skin, a profile that could break your, or anyone else’s heart, and her dark hair, of an alive texture, hung down over her shoulders.

“Hello, my great beauty,” the Colonel said.

“Oh, oh, hello,” she said. “I thought I would miss you. I am so sorry to be late.”

Her voice was low and delicate and she spoke English with caution.

“*Ciao,* Andrea,” she said. “How is Emily and are the children? “

“Probably just the same as when I answered that same question for you at noon.”

“I am so sorry,” she said and blushed. “I am so excited and I always say the wrong things. What should I say? Have you had a good time here all afternoon?”

“Yes,” said Andrea. “With my old friend and severest critic.”

“Who is that?”

"Scotch whisky and water."

"I suppose if he must tease me he must," she said to the Colonel. "But you won't tease me, will you?"

"Take him over to that corner table and talk to him. I'm tired of you both."

"I'm not tired of you," the Colonel told him. "But I think it is a good idea. Should we have a drink sitting down, Renata?"

"I'd love to if Andrea isn't angry."

"I'm never angry."

"Would you have a drink with us, Andrea?"

"No," said Andrea. "Get along to your table. I'm sick of seeing it unoccupied."

"Good-bye, Caro. Thanks for the drink we didn't have."

"*Ciao,* Ricardo," Andrea said and that was all.

He turned his fine, long, tall back on them and looked into the mirror that is placed behind bars so a man can tell when he is drinking too much, and decided that he did not like what he saw there. "Ettore," he said. "Please put this nonsense on my bill."

He walked out after waiting carefully for his coat, swinging into it, and tipping the man who brought it exactly what he should be tipped plus twenty per cent.

At the corner table, Renata said, "Do you think we hurt his feelings?"

"No. He loves you and he likes me."

"Andrea is so nice. And you're so nice."

"Waiter," the Colonel called; then asked, "Do you want a dry Martini, too?"

"Yes," she said. "I'd love one."

"Two very dry Martinis," the Colonel said. "Montgomerys. Fifteen to one."

The waiter, who had been in the desert, smiled and was gone, and the Colonel turned to Renata.

"You're nice," he said. "You're also very beautiful and lovely and

I love you."

"You always say that and I don't know what it means but I like to hear it."

"How old are you now?"

"Nearly nineteen. Why?"

"And you don't know what it means?"

"No. Why should I? Americans always say it to you before they go away. It seems to be necessary to them. But I love you very much, too, whatever that is."

"Let's have a fine time," the Colonel said. "Let's not think about anything at all."

"I would like that. I cannot think very well this time of day at any rate."

"Here are the drinks," the Colonel said. "Remember not to say, chin-chin."

"I remember that from before. I never say chin-chin, nor here's to you, nor bottom's up."

"We just raise the glass to each other and, if you wish, we can touch the edges."

"I wish," she said.

The Martinis were icy cold and true Montgomerys, and, after touching the edges, they felt them glow happily all through their upper bodies.

"And what have you been doing?" the Colonel asked.

Nothing. I still wait to go away to school."

"Where now?"

"God knows. Wherever I go to learn English."

"Turn your head and raise your chin once for me."

"You're not making fun?"

"No. I'm not making fun."

She turned her head and raised her chin, without vanity, nor coquetry, and the Colonel felt his heart turn over in-side him, as though some sleeping animal had rolled over in its burrow and

frightened, deliciously, the other animal sleeping close beside.

"Oh you," he said. "Would you ever like to run for Queen of Heaven?"

"That would be sacrilegious."

"Yes," he said. "I suppose it would and I withdraw the suggestion."

"Richard," she said. "No I can't say it."

"Say it."

"No."

The Colonel thought, I order you to say it. And she said, "Please never look at me like that."

"I'm sorry," the Colonel said. "I had just slipped into my trade unconsciously."

"And if we were such a thing as married would you practice your trade in the home?"

"No. I swear it. I never have. Not in my heart."

"With no one?"

"With no one of your sex."

"I don't like that word your sex. It sounds as though you were practicing your trade."

"I throw my trade out of that goddamn window into the Grand Canal."

"There," she said. "You see how quickly you practice it?"

"All right," he said. "I love you and my trade can gently leave."

"Let me feel your hand," she said. "It's all right. You can put it on the table."

"Thank you," the Colonel said.

"Please don't," she said. "I wanted to feel it because all last week, every night, or I think nearly every night, I dreamed about it, and it was a strange mixed-up dream and I dreamed it was the hand of Our Lord."

"That's bad. You oughtn't to do that."

"I know it. That's just what I dreamed."

“You aren’t on the junk, are you?”

“I don’t know what you mean, and please don’t make fun when I tell you something true. I dreamed just as I say.”

“What did the hand do?”

“Nothing. Or maybe that is not true. Mostly it was just a hand.”

“Like this one?” The Colonel asked, looking at the misshapen hand with distaste, and remembering the two times that had made it that way.

“Not like. It *was* that one. May I touch it carefully with my fingers if it does not hurt?”

“It does not hurt. Where it hurts is in the head, the legs and the feet. I don’t believe there’s any sensation in that hand.”

“You’re wrong,” she said. “Richard. There is very much sensation in that hand.”

“I don’t like to look at it much. You don’t think we could skip it.”

“Of course. But you don’t have to dream about it.”

“No. I have other dreams.”

“Yes. I can imagine. But I dream lately about this hand. Now that I have touched it carefully, we can talk about funny things if you like. What is there funny we should talk about?”

“Let’s look at the people and discuss them.”

“That’s lovely,” she said. “And we won’t do it with malice. Only with our best wit. Yours and mine.”

“Good,” the Colonel said. “Waiter, *Ancora due Martini.*”

He did not like to call for Montgomerys in a tone that could be overheard because there were two obvious Britishers at the next table.

The male might have been wounded, the Colonel thought, although, from his looks, it seems unlikely. But God help me to avoid brutality. And look at Renata’s eyes, he thought. They are probably the most beautiful of all the beautiful things she has, with the longest honest lashes I have ever seen and she never uses them

for anything except to look at you honestly and straight. What a damn wonderful girl and what am I doing here anyway? It is wicked. She is your last and true and only love, he thought, and that's not evil. It is only unfortunate. No, he thought, it is damned fortunate and you are very fortunate.

They sat at a small table in the corner of the room and on their right there were four women at a larger table. One of the women was in mourning; a mourning so theatrical that it reminded the Colonel of the Lady Diana Manners playing the nun in Max Reinhardt's, "The Miracle." This woman had an attractive, plump, naturally gay face and her mourning was incongruous.

At the table there was another woman who had hair three times as white as hair can be, the Colonel thought. She, also, had a pleasant face. There were two other women whose faces meant nothing to the Colonel.

"Are they lesbians?" he asked the girl.

"I do not know," she said. "They are all very nice people."

"I should say they are lesbians. But maybe they are just good friends. Maybe they are both. It means nothing to me and it was not a criticism."

"You are nice when you are gentle."

"Do you suppose the word gentleman derives from a man who is gentle?"

"I do not know," the girl said, and she ran her fingers very lightly over the scarred hand. "But I love you when you are gentle. "

"I'll try very hard to be gentle," the Colonel said. "Who do you suppose that son of a bitch is at the table beyond them?"

"You don't stay gentle very long," the girl said. "Let us ask Ettore."

They looked at the man at the third table. He had a strange face like an over-enlarged, disappointed weasel or ferret. It looked as pock-marked and as blemished as the mountains of the moon seen

through a cheap telescope and, the Colonel thought, it looked like Goebbels' face, if Herr Goebbels had ever been in a plane that burned, and not been able to bailout before the fire reached him.

Above this face, which was ceaselessly peering, as though the answer might be found by enough well directed glances and by queries, there was black hair that seemed to have no connection with the human race. The man looked as though he had been scalped and then the hair replaced. Very interesting, the Colonel thought. Can he be a compatriot? Yes, he must.

A little spit ran out of the corner of his mouth as he spoke, peeringly, with the elderly, wholesome looking woman who was with him. She looks like anybody's mother in an illustration in the *Ladies' Home Journal,* the Colonel thought. The *Ladies' Home Journal* was one of the magazines received regularly at the Officer's Club in Trieste and the Colonel looked through it when it came. It is a wonderful magazine, he thought, because it combines sexology and beautiful foods. It makes me hungry both ways.

But who do you suppose that character is? He looks like a caricature of an American who has been run one half way through a meat chopper and then been boiled, slightly, in oil. I'm not being so gentle, he thought.

Ettore, with his emaciated face, and his love of joking and fundamental and abiding disrespect, came over and the Colonel said, "Who is that spiritual character?"

Ettore shook his head.

The man was short and dark with glossy black hair that did not seem to go with his strange face. He looked, the Colonel thought, as though he had forgotten to change his wig as he grew older. Has a wonderful face though, the Colonel thought. Looks like some of the hills around Verdun. I don't suppose he could be Goebbels and he picked up that face in the last days when they were all playing at Gotterdammerung. *Komm' Süsser Tod,* he thought. Well they sure bought themselves a nice big piece of Süsser Tod at the end.

“You don’t want a nice Süsser Tod sandwich do you Miss Renata?”

“I don’t think so,” the girl said. “Though I love Bach and I am sure Cipriani could make one.”

“I was not talking against Bach,” the Colonel said.

“I know it.”

“Hell,” the Colonel said. “Bach was practically a cobelligerent. As you were,” he added.

“I don’t think we have to talk against me.”

“Daughter,” the Colonel said. “When will you learn that I might joke against you because I love you?”

“Now,” she said. “I’ve learned it. But you know it’s fun not to joke too rough.”

“Good. I’ve learned it.”

“How often do you think of me during the week?”

“All of the time.”

“No. Tell me truly.”

“All of the time. Truly.”

“Do you think it is this bad for everyone?”

“I wouldn’t know,” the Colonel said. “That’s one of the things I would not know.”

“I hope it’s not this bad for everyone. I had no idea it could be this bad.”

“Well you know now.”

“Yes,” the girl said. “I know now. I know now and for keeps and for always. Is that the correct way to say it?”

“I know now is enough,” the Colonel said. “Ettore, that character with the inspiring face and the nice looking woman with him doesn’t live at the Gritti does he?”

“No,” Ettore said. “He lives next door but he goes to the Gritti sometimes to eat.”

“Good,” the Colonel said. “It will be wonderful to see him if I should ever be down hearted. Who is the woman with him? His

wife? His mother? His daughter?

"There you have me," Ettore said. "We haven't kept track of him in Venice. He has aroused neither love, hate, dislike, fear nor suspicion. Do you really want to know anything about him? I could ask Cipriani."

"Let us skip him," the girl said. "Is that how you say it?"

"Let's skip him," the Colonel said.

"When we have so little time, Richard. He is rather a waste of time."

"I was looking at him as at a drawing by Goya. Faces are pictures too."

"Look at mine and I will look at yours. Please skip the man. He didn't come here to do anyone any harm."

"Let me look at your face and you not look at mine."

"No," she said. "That's not fair. I have to remember yours all week."

"And what do I do?" the Colonel asked her.

Ettore came over, unable to avoid conspiracy and, having gathered his intelligence rapidly and as a Venetian should, said,

"My colleague who works at his hotel, says that he drinks three or four highballs, and then writes vastly and fluently far into the night."

"I dare say that makes marvelous reading."

"I dare say," Ettore said. "But it was hardly the method of Dante."

"Dante was another *vieux con,*" the Colonel said. "I mean as a man. Not as a writer."

"I agree," Ettore said. "I think you will find no one, outside of Firenze, who has studied his life who would not agree."

"Eff Florence," the Colonel said.

"A difficult maneuver," Ettore said. "Many have attempted it but very few have succeeded. Why do you dislike it, my Colonel?"

"Too complicated to explain. But it was the depot," he said

deposito, "of my old regiment when I was a boy."

"That I can understand. I have my own reasons for disliking it too. You know a good town?"

"Yes," said the Colonel. "This one. A part of Milano; and Bologna. And Bergamo."

"Cipriani has a large store of vodka in case the Russians should come," Ettore said, loving to joke rough.

"They'll bring their own vodka, duty free."

"Still I believe Cipriani is prepared for them."

"Then he is the only man who is," the Colonel said. "Tell him not to take any checks from junior officers on the Bank of Odessa, and thank you for the data on my compatriot. I won't take more of your time."

Ettore left and the girl turned toward him, and looked in his old steel eyes and put both her hands on his bad one and said, "You were quite gentle."

"And you are most beautiful and I love you."

"It's nice to hear it anyway."

"What are we going to do about dinner?"

"I will have to call my home and find out if I can come out."

"Why do you look sad now?"

"Do I?"

"Yes."

"I am not, really. I am as happy as I ever am. Truly. Please believe me, Richard. But how would you like to be a girl nineteen years old in love with a man over fifty years old that you knew was going to die?"

"You put it a little bluntly," the Colonel said. "But you are very beautiful when you say it."

"I never cry," the girl said. "Never. I made a rule not to. But I would cry now."

"Don't cry," the Colonel said. "I'm gentle now and the hell with the rest of it."

“Say once again that you love me.”

“I love you and I love you and I love you.”

“Will you do your best not to die?”

“Yes.”

“What did the doctor say?”

“So-so.”

“Not worse?”

“No,” he lied.

“Then let us have another Martini,” the girl said. “You know I never drank a Martini until we met.”

“I know. But you drink them awfully well.”

“Shouldn’t you take the medicine?”

“Yes,” the Colonel said. “I should take the medicine.”

“May I give it to you?”

“Yes,” the Colonel said. “You may give it to me.”

They continued to sit at the table in the comer and some people went out, and others came in. The Colonel felt a little dizzy from the medicine and he let it ride. That’s the way it always is, he thought. To hell with it.

He saw the girl watching him and he smiled at her. It was an old smile that he had been using for fifty years, ever since he first smiled, and it was still as sound as your grandfather’s Purdey shotgun. I guess my older brother has that, he thought. Well, he could always shoot better than I could and he deserves it.

“Listen, daughter,” he said. “Don’t be sorry for me.”

“I’m not. Not at all. I just love you.”

“It isn’t much of a trade is it?” He said *oficio* instead of trade, because they spoke Spanish together too, when they left French, and when they did not wish to speak English before other people. Spanish is a rough language, the Colonel thought, rougher than a corncob sometimes. But you can say what you mean in it and make it stick.

“*Es un oficio bastante malo,*” he repeated, “loving me.”

“Yes. But it is the only one I have.”

“Don’t you write anymore poetry?”

“It was young girl poetry. Like young girl painting. Everyone is talented at a certain age.”

At what age do you become old in this country, the Colonel thought. No one is ever old in Venice, but they grow up very fast. I grew up very rapidly in the Veneto myself, and I was never as old as I was at twenty-one.

“How is your mother?” he asked, lovingly.

“She is very well. She does not receive and she sees almost no one because of her sorrow.”

“Do you think she would mind if we had a baby?”

“I don’t know. She is very intelligent, you know. But I would have to marry someone, I suppose. I don’t really want to.”

“We could be married.”

“No,” she said. “I thought it over, and I thought we should not. It is just a decision as the one about crying.”

“Maybe you make wrong decisions. Christ knows I’ve made a few and too many men are dead from when I was wrong.”

“I think, perhaps, you exaggerate. I don’t believe you made many wrong decisions.”

“Not many,” the Colonel said. “But enough. Three is plenty in my trade, and I made all three.”

“I’d like to know about them.”

“They’d bore you,” the Colonel told her. “They beat the hell out of me to remember them. So what would they do to some outsider?”

“Am I an outsider?”

“No. You’re my true love. My last and only and true love.”

“Did you make them early or late? The decisions.”

“I made them early. In the middle. And late.”

“Wouldn’t you tell me about them? I would like to have a share in your sad trade.”

“The hell with them,” the Colonel said. “They were made and they’ve all been paid for. Only you can’t pay for that.”

“Can you tell me about that and why?”

“No,” the Colonel said. And that was the end of that.

“Then let’s have fun.”

“Let’s,” the Colonel said. “With our one and only life.”

“Maybe there are others. Other lives.”

“I don’t think so,” the Colonel said. “Turn your head sideways, beauty.”

“Like this?”

“Like that,” the Colonel said. “Exactly like that.”

So, the Colonel thought, here we come into the last round and I do not know even the number of the round. I have loved but three women and have lost them thrice.

You lose them the same way you lose a battalion; by errors of judgment; orders that are impossible to fulfill, and through impossible conditions. Also through brutality.

I have lost three battalions in my life and three women and now I have a fourth, and loveliest, and where the hell does it end?

You tell me, General, and, incidentally, while we are discussing the matter, and it is a frank discussion of the situation and in no sense a Council of War, as you have so often pointed out to me General: GENERAL WHERE IS YOUR CAVALRY?

I have thought so, he said to himself. The Commanding Officer does not know where his cavalry is, and his cavalry are not completely accurate as to their situation, nor their mission, and they will, some of them, enough, muck off as cavalry have always mucked off in all the wars since they, the Cavalry, had the big horses.

“Beauty,” he said, “*Ma très cbère et bien aimée.* I am very dull and I am sorry.”

“You are never dull, to me, and I love you and I only wish we could be cheerful tonight.”

“We damn well will be,” said the Colonel. “Do you know anything particular we should be cheerful about?”

“We might be cheerful about us, and about the town. You’ve often been very cheerful.”

“Yes,” the Colonel agreed. “I have been.”

“Don’t you think we could do it once more?”

“Sure. Of course. Why not?”

“Do you see the boy with the wave in his hair, that is natural, and he only pushes it a little, skillfully, to be more handsome? “

“I see him,” the Colonel said.

“He is a very good painter, but he has false teeth in front because he was a little bit *pédéraste* once and other *pédérastes* attacked him one night on the Lido when there was a full moon.”

“How old are you?”

“I will be nineteen.”

“How do you know this?”

“I know it from the Gondoliere. This boy is a very good painter, for now. There aren’t any really good painters now. But with false teeth, now, in his twenty-fifth year, what a thing.”

“I love you very truly,” the Colonel said.

“I love you very truly, too. Whatever that means in American. I also love you in Italian, against all my judgment and all of my wishes.”

“We shouldn’t wish for too goddamn much,” the Colonel said. “Because we are always liable to get it.”

“I agree,” she said. “But I would like to get what I wish for now.”

Neither of them said anything and then the girl said, “That boy, he is a man now, of course, and goes with very many women to hide what he is, painted my portrait once. You can have it if you like.”

“Thank you,” the Colonel said. “I would love it.”

“It is very romantic. My hair is twice as long as it has ever been

and I look as though I were rising from the sea without the head wet. Actually, you rise from the sea with the hair very flat and coming to points at the end. It is almost the look of a very nearly dead rat. But Daddy paid him adequately for the portrait, and, while it is not truly me, it is the way you like to think of me."

"I think of you when you come from the sea too."

"Of course. Very ugly. But you might like to have this portrait for a souvenir."

"Your lovely mother would not mind?"

"Mummy would not mind. She would be glad to be rid of it, I think. We have better pictures in the house."

"I love you and your mother both very much."

"I must tell her," the girl said.

"Do you think that pock-marked jerk is really a writer?"

"Yes. If Ettore says so. He loves to joke but he does not lie. Richard, what is a jerk? Tell me truly."

"It is a little rough to state. But I think it means a man who has never worked at his trade (*oficio*) truly, and is presumptuous in some annoying way."

"I must learn to use the term properly."

"Don't use it," the Colonel said.

Then the Colonel asked, "When do I get the portrait?"

"Tonight if you wish it. I'll have someone wrap it and send it from the house. Where will you hang it?"

"In my quarters."

"And no one will come in and make remarks and speak badly of me?"

"No. They damn well will not. Also I'll tell them it is a portrait of my daughter."

"Did you ever have a daughter?"

"No. I always wanted one."

"I can be your daughter as well as everything else."

"That would be incest."

“I don’t think that would be so terrible in a city as old as this and that has seen what this city has seen.”

“Listen, Daughter.”

“Good,” she said. “That was fine. I liked it.”

“All right,” the Colonel said and his voice was thickened a little. “I liked it, too.”

“Do you see now why I love you when I know better than to do it?”

“Look, Daughter. Where should we dine?”

“Wherever you like.”

“Would you eat at the Gritti?”

“Of course.”

“Then call the house and ask for permission.”

“No. I decided not to ask permission but to send word where I was dining. So they would not worry.”

“But do you really prefer the Gritti?”

“I do. Because it is a lovely restaurant and it is where you live and anyone can look at us that wants to.”

“When did you get like that?”

“I have always been like that. I have never cared what anyone thought, ever. Nor have I ever done anything that I was ashamed of except tell lies when I was a little girl and be unkind to people.”

“I wish we could be married and have five sons,” the Colonel said.

“So do I,” the girl said. “And send them to the five corners of the world.”

“Are there five corners to the world?”

“I don’t know,” she said. “It sounded as though there were when I said it. And now we are having fun again, aren’t we?”

“Yes, Daughter,” the Colonel said.

“Say it again. Just as you said it.”

“Yes, Daughter.”

“Oh,” she said. “People must be very complicated. Please may I

take your hand?"

"It's so damned ugly and I dislike looking at it."

"You don't know about your hand."

"That's a matter of opinion," he said. "I'd say you were wrong, Daughter."

"Maybe I am wrong. But we're having fun again and whatever the bad thing was is gone now."

"It's gone the way the mist is burned off the hollows in broken ground when the sun comes out," the Colonel said. "And you're the sun."

"I want to be the moon, too."

"You are," the Colonel told her. "Also any particular planet that you wish to be and I will give you an accurate location of the planet. Christ, Daughter, you can be a goddamn constellation if you like. Only that's an airplane."

"I'll be the moon. She has many troubles too."

"Yes. Her sorrows come regularly. But she always fills before she wanes."

"She looks so sad to me sometimes across the Canal that I cannot stand it."

"She's been around a long time," the Colonel said.

"Do you think we should have one more Montgomery?" the girl asked and the Colonel noticed that the British were gone.

He had been noticing nothing but her lovely face. I'll get killed sometime that way, he thought. On the other hand it is a form of concentration, I suppose. But it is damned careless.

"Yes," he said. "Why not?"

"They make me feel very good," the girl said.

"They have a certain effect on me, too, the way Cipriani makes them."

"Cipriani is very intelligent."

"He's more than that. He's able."

"Someday he'll own all Venice."

“Not quite all,” the Colonel disagreed. “He’ll never own you.”

“No,” she said. “Nor will anyone else unless you want me.”

“I want you Daughter. But I don’t want to own you.”

“I know it,” the girl said. “And that’s one more reason why I love you.”

“Let’s get Ettore and have him call up your house. You can tell them about the portrait.”

“You are quite correct. If you want the portrait tonight, I must speak to the butler to have it wrapped and sent. I will also ask to speak to Mummy and tell her where we are dining and, if you like, I will ask her permission.”

“No,” the Colonel said. “Ettore, two Montgomerys, super Montgomerys, with garlic olives, not the big ones, and please call the home of this lady and let her know when you have completed the communication. And all of this as rapidly as possible.”

“Yes, my Colonel.”

“Now, Daughter, let us resume the having of the fun.”

“It was resumed when you spoke,” she said.

Chapter X

They were walking, now, along the right side of the street that led to the Gritti. The wind was at their backs and it blew the girl's hair forward. The wind parted her hair in the back and blew it forward about her face. They were looking in the shop windows and the girl stopped in front of the lighted window of a jewelry shop.

There were many good pieces of old jewelry in the window and they stood and looked at them and pointed out the best ones to each other, unclasping their hands to do so.

"Is there anything you really want? I could get it in the morning. Cipriani would loan me the money."

"No," she said. "I do not want anything but I notice that you never give me presents."

"You are much richer than I am. I bring you small things from the PX and I buy you drinks and meals."

"And take me in gondolas and to lovely places in the country."

"I never thought you wanted presents of hard stones."

"I don't. It is just the thought of giving and then one looks at them and thinks about them when they are worn."

"I'm learning," the Colonel said. "But what could I buy you on Army pay that would be like your square emeralds? "

"But don't you see. I inherited them. They carne from my grandmother, and she had them from her mother who had them from her mother. Do you think it is the same to wear stones that come from dead people?"

"I never thought about it."

"You can have them if you like, if you like stones. To me they

are only something to wear like a dress from Paris. You don't like to wear your dress uniform, do you?"

"No."

"You don't like to carry a sword, do you?"

"No, repeat, no."

"You are not that kind of a soldier and I am not that sort of girl. But sometime give me something lasting that I can wear and be happy each time I wear it."

"I see," the Colonel said. "And I will."

"You learn fast about things you do not know," the girl said. "And you make lovely quick decisions. I would like you to have the emeralds and you could keep them in your pocket like a lucky piece, and feel them if you were lonely."

"I don't put my hands much in my pockets when I'm working. I usually twirl a stick, or something, or point things out with a pencil."

"But you could put your hand in your pocket only once in a long time and feel them."

"I'm not lonely when I'm working. I have to think too hard to ever be lonely."

"But you are not working now."

"No. Only preparing the best way to be overrun."

"I'm going to give them to you anyway. I'm quite sure Mummy will understand. Also I won't need to tell her for quite a long time. She keeps no check on my things. I'm sure my maid would never tell her."

"I don't think I should take them."

"You should, please, to give me pleasure."

"I'm not sure it's honorable."

"That is like not being sure whether you are a virgin. What you do to give pleasure to another whom you love is most honorable."

"All right," the Colonel said. "I will take them for better or for worse."

“Now you say thank you,” the girl said and slipped them into his pocket as quickly and ably as a jewel thief might. “I brought them with me because I have been thinking and deciding about this all week.”

“I thought you thought about my hand.”

“Don’t be surly, Richard. And *you* should never be stupid. It is your hand you touch them with. Didn’t you think of that?”

“No. And I was stupid. What would you like from that window?”

“I would like that small Negro with the ebony face and the turban made of chip diamonds with the small ruby on the crown of the turban. I should wear it as a pin. Everyone wore them in the old days in this city and the faces were those of their confidential servants. I have coveted this for a long time, but I wanted you to give it to me.”

“I’ll send it in the morning.”

“No. Give it to me when we have lunch before you go.”

“Right,” the Colonel said.

“Now we must walk or we will be too late for dinner.”

They started to walk, arm through arm, and as they went up the first bridge, the wind lashed at them.

When the twinge came, the Colonel said to himself, the hell with that.

“Richard,” the girl said. “Put your hand in your pocket to please me and feel them.”

The Colonel did.

“They feel wonderful,” he said.

Chapter XI

They came in, out of the wind and the cold, through the main entrance of the Gritti Palace Hotel, into the light and warmth of the lobby.

"Good evening, Contessa," the concierge said. "Good evening, my Colonel. It must be cold outside."

"It is," the Colonel said, and did not add any of the rough or obscene phrases about the extent of the cold, or the force of the wind, that he could ordinarily have employed, for their mutual pleasure when speaking, alone, with the concierge.

As they entered the long hallway that led to the big stairs and to the elevator, leaving, on your right, the entrance to the bar, the doorway onto the Grand Canal, and the entrance to the dining room, the *Gran Maestro* came out of the bar.

He was wearing a formal white jacket, cut long, and he smiled at them and said, "Good evening, my Countess. Good evening, my Colonel."

"*Gran Maestro,*" the Colonel said.

The *Gran Maestro* smiled and, still bowing, said, "We are dining in the bar at the far end. There is no one here now in the winter time and the dining room is too big. I have saved your table. We have a very fine lobster if you would like him to commence with."

"Is he really fresh?"

"I saw him this morning when he came from the market in a basket. He was alive and a dark green and completely unfriendly."

"Would you like lobster, Daughter, to start your dinner?"

The Colonel was conscious of using the word, and so was the

Gran Maestro, and so was the girl. But to each one it meant a different thing.

"I wanted to have him for you in case any *pescecani* came in. They are down now to gamble at the Lido. I was not trying to sell him."

"I would love some lobster," the girl said. "Cold, and with mayonnaise. The mayonnaise rather stiff." She said this in Italian.

"It isn't too expensive?" she said to the Colonel, seriously.

"*Ay hija mia,*" the Colonel said.

"Feel in your right pocket," she said.

"I'll see that he is not too expensive," the *Gran Maestro* said. "Or I'll buy him myself. I could get him quite easily with a week's wages."

"Sold to TRUST," the Colonel said, this being the code designation of the task force occupying Trieste. "He only costs me a day's wages."

"Put your hand in your right hand pocket and feel very rich," the girl said.

The *Gran Maestro* had sensed this was a private joke and had gone; silently. He was happy about the girl, whom he respected and admired, and he was happy for his Colonel.

"I am rich," the Colonel said. "But if you tease me about them, I will give them back, and on the linen tablecloth, and in public."

He was teasing rough in his turn; throwing in the counter-attack without even thinking.

"No you won't," she said. "Because you love them already."

"I would take anything I love and throw it off the highest cliff you ever saw and not wait to hear it bounce."

"No, you wouldn't," the girl said. "You would not throw me off any high cliffs."

"No," the Colonel agreed. "And forgive me for talking badly."

"You didn't talk very badly and I didn't believe it anyway," the girl told him. "Now should I go to the women's room to comb my

hair and make myself presentable, or should I come up to your room?"

"Which do you wish?"

"To come to your room, of course, and see how you live and how things are there."

"What about the hotel?"

"Everything is known in Venice anyway. But it is also known who my family are and that I am a good girl. Also they know it is you and it is I. We have some credit to exhaust."

"Good," the Colonel said. "By stairs or elevator?"

"By elevator," she said, and he heard the change in her voice. "You can call a boy or we can run it ourselves."

"We run it ourselves," the Colonel said. "I checked out on elevators long ago."

It was a good ride with a slight bump, and a rectification at the end, and the Colonel thought: Checked out, eh? You better be checked out again.

The corridor was now not simply beautiful, but exciting, and putting the key into the lock was not a simple process, but a rite.

"Here it is," the Colonel said when he swung the door open. "What there is of it."

"It is charming," the girl said. "But it is awfully cold with the windows open."

"I'll close them."

"No, please. Leave them open if you like it that way."

The Colonel kissed her and felt her wonderful, long, young, lithe and properly built body against his own body, which was hard and good, but beat-up, and as he kissed her he thought of nothing.

They kissed for a long time, standing straight, and kissing true, in the cold of the open windows that were onto the Grand Canal.

"Oh," she said. Then, "Oh."

"We owe nothing," the Colonel said. "Not a thing."

"Will you marry me and will we have the five sons?"

“I will! I will.”

“The thing is that, would you?”

“Of course.”

“Kiss me once again and make the buttons of your uniform hurt me but not too much.”

They stood there and kissed each other true. “I have a disappointment for you, Richard,” she said. “I have a disappointment about everything.”

She said it as a flat statement and it came to the Colonel in the same way as a message came from one of the three battalions, when the battalion commander spoke the absolute truth and told you the worst.

“You are positive?”

“Yes.”

“My poor Daughter,” he said.

Now there was nothing dark about the word and she was his Daughter, truly, and he pitied her and loved her.

“No matter,” he said. “You comb yourself and make a new mouth and all that, and we will have a good dinner.”

“Say once more, first, that you love me and make the buttons very tight.”

“I love you,” the Colonel said quite formally.

Then he whispered into her ear as gently as he knew how to whisper, as his whisper was when they are fifteen feet away and you are a young lieutenant on a patrol, “I love you only, my best and last and only and one true love.”

“Good,” she said, and kissed him hard so he could feel the sweet salt of the blood inside his lip. And I like that too, he thought.

“Now I will comb my hair and make my mouth new and you can watch me.”

“Do you want me to shut the windows?”

“No,” she said. “We will do it all in the cold.”

“Who do you love?”

"You," she said. "And we don't have too much luck do we?"

"I don't know," the Colonel said. "Go ahead and comb your hair."

The Colonel went into the bathroom to wash up for dinner. The bathroom was the only disappointing part of the room. Due to the exigencies of the Gritti having been built as a palace, there had been no site for bathrooms at the time of building, and, later, when they were introduced, they had been built down the corridor and those entitled to use them gave due warning beforehand and water was heated and towels laid out.

This bathroom had been cut, arbitrarily, from a corner of the room and it was a defensive, rather than an attacking bathroom, the Colonel felt. Washing, and forced to look in the mirror to check any traces of lipstick, he regarded his face.

It looks as though it had been cut out of wood by an indifferent craftsman, he thought.

He looked at the different welts and ridges that had come before they had plastic surgery, and at the thin, only to be observed by the initiate, lines of the excellent plastic operations after head wounds.

Well, that is what I have to offer as a *gueule* or a *façade,* he thought. It is a damn poor offer. The only thing is that it is tanned, and that takes some of the curse off of it. But, Christ what an ugly man.

He did not notice the old used steel of his eyes nor the small, long extending laugh wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, nor that his broken nose was like a gladiator's in the oldest statues. Nor did he notice his basically kind mouth which could be truly ruthless.

The hell with you, he said to the mirror. You beat-up, miserable. Should we rejoin the ladies?

He went out from the bathroom into the room, and he was as young as at his first attack. Every worthless thing had been left in the bathroom. As always, he thought. That's the place for it.

Où sont les neiges d'antan? Où sont les neiges d'autrefois? Dans le

pissoir toute la chose comme ça.

The girl whose first name was Renata, had the doors of the tall armoire open. They were all mirrored inside and she was combing her hair.

She was not combing it for vanity, nor to do to the Colonel what she knew it could and would do. She was combing it with difficulty and without respect, and, since it was very heavy hair and as alive as the hair of peasants, or the hair of the beauties of the great nobility, it was resistant to the comb.

"The wind made it very tangled," she said. "Do you love me still?"

"Yes," the Colonel said. "May I help you?"

"No, I've done it all my life."

"You *could* stand sidewise."

"No. All contours are for our five sons and for your head to rest on."

"I was only thinking of the face," the Colonel said. "But thank you for calling my attention. My attention has been faulty again."

"I am over bold."

"No," the Colonel said. "In America, they make such things of wire and of sponge-rubber, such as you use in the seats of tanks. You never know there, whether there is any truth in the matter, unless you are a bad boy as I am."

"Here it is not that way," she said, and, with the comb, swung her now parted hair forward so that it came below the line of her cheek, and slanting back, hung over her shoulders.

"Do you like it neat?"

"It's not too neat but it is damn lovely."

"I could put it up and all that sort of thing if you value neatness. But I cannot manage hairpins and it seems so silly." Her voice was so lovely and it always reminded him of Pablo Casals playing the cello that it made him feel as a wound does that you think you cannot bear. But you can bear anything, he thought.

“I love you very much the way you are,” the Colonel said. “And you are the most beautiful woman I have ever known, or seen, even in paintings by good painters.”

“I wonder why the portrait has not come.”

“The portrait is lovely to have,” the Colonel said, and now he was a General again without thinking of it. “But it is like skinning a dead horse.”

“Please don’t be rough,” the girl said. “I don’t feel at all like being rough tonight.”

“I slipped into the jargon of my *sale métier.*”

“No,” she said. “Please put your arms around me. Gently and well. Please. It is not a dirty trade. It is the oldest and the best, although most people who practice it are unworthy.”

He held her as tight as he could without hurting and she said, “I would not have you be a lawyer nor a priest. Nor sell things. Nor be a great success. I love you to be in I your trade and I love you. Please whisper to me if you wish.”

The Colonel whispered; holding her tight, and with his heart broken, honestly and fairly, in his whisper that was as barely audible as a silent dog whistle heard close to the ear, “I love you, devil. And you’re my Daughter, too. And I don’t care about our losses because the moon is our mother and our father. And now let’s go down to dinner.”

He whispered this last so low that it was inaudible to anyone who did not love you.

“Yes,” the girl said. “Yes. But kiss me once more first.”

Chapter XII

They were at their table in the far comer of the bar, where the Colonel had both his flanks covered, and he rested solidly against the comer of the room. The *Gran Maestro* knew about this, since he had been an excellent sergeant in a good company of infantry, in a first-rate regiment, and he would no more have seated his Colonel in the middle of a room than he would have taken up a stupid defensive position.

"The lobster," the *Gran Maestro* said.

The lobster was imposing. He was double the size a lobster should be, and his unfriendliness had gone with the boiling, so that now he looked a monument to his dead self; complete with protruding eyes and his delicate, far-extended antennae that were for knowing what rather stupid eyes could not tell him.

He looks a little bit like Georgie Patton, the Colonel thought. But he probably never cried in his life when he was moved.

"Do you think that he will be tough?" he asked the girl in Italian.

"No," the *Gran Maestro* assured them, still bowing with the lobster. "He's truly not tough. He's only big. You know the type."

"All right," the Colonel said. "Serve him."

"And what will you drink?"

"What do you want, Daughter?"

"What you want."

"Capri Bianco," the Colonel said. "Secco and really cold."

"I have it ready," said the *Gran Maestro.*

"We are having fun," the girl said. "We are having it again and

without sorrow. Isn't he an imposing lobster?"

"He is," the Colonel answered. "And he better damn well be tender."

"He will be," the girl told him. "The *Gran Maestro* doesn't lie. Isn't it wonderful to have people who do not lie?"

"Very wonderful and quite rare," the Colonel said. "I was thinking just now of a man named Georgie Patton who possibly never told the truth in his life."

"Do you ever lie?"

"I've lied four times. But each time I was very tired. That's not an excuse," he added.

"I lied a lot when I was a little girl. But mostly it was making up stories. Or I hope so. But I have never lied to my own advantage."

"I have," said the Colonel. "Four times."

"Would you have been a general if you had not lied?"

"If I had lied as others lied, I would have been a three-star general."

"Would it make you happier to be a three-star general?"

"No," said the Colonel. "It would not."

"Put your right hand, your real hand, in your pocket once and tell me how you feel."

The Colonel did so.

"Wonderful," he said. "But I have to give them back you know."

"No. Please no."

"We won't go into it now."

Just then the lobster was served.

It was tender, with the peculiar slippery grace of that kicking muscle which is the tail, and the claws were excellent; neither too thin, nor too fat.

"A lobster fills with the moon," the Colonel told the girl. "When the moon is dark he is not worth eating."

"I didn't know that."

"I think it may be because, with the full moon, he feeds all

night. Or maybe it is that the full moon brings him feed."

"They come from the Dalmatian coast do they not?"

"Yes," the Colonel said. "That's your rich coast in fish. Maybe I should say *our* rich coast."

"Say it," the girl said. "You don't know how important things that are said are."

"They are a damn sight more important when you put them on paper."

"No," the girl said. "I don't agree. The paper means nothing unless you say them in your heart."

"And what if you haven't a heart, or your heart is worthless? "

"You have a heart and it is not worthless."

I would sure as hell like to trade it in on a new one, the Colonel thought. I do not see why that one, of all the muscles, should fail me. But he said nothing of this, and put his hand in his pocket.

"They feel wonderful," he said. "And you look wonderful."

"Thank you," she said. "I will remember that all week."

"You could always just look in the glass."

"The mirror bores me," she said. "Putting on lipstick and moving your mouths over each other to get it spread properly and combing your too heavy hair is not a life for a woman, or even a girl alone, who loves someone. When you want to be the moon and various stars and live with your man and have five sons, looking at yourself in the mirror and doing the artifices of a woman is not very exciting."

"Then let us be married at once."

"No," she said. "I had to make a decision about that, as about the other different things. All week long is my time to make decisions."

"I make them too," the Colonel told her. "But I am very vulnerable on this."

"Let's not talk about it. It makes a sweet hurt, but I think we would do better to find out what the *Gran Maestro* has for meat.

Please drink your wine. You haven't touched it."

"I'll touch it now," the Colonel said. He did and it was pale and cold like the wines of Greece, but not resinous, and its body was as full and as lovely as that of Renata.

"It's very like you."

"Yes. I know. That's why I wanted you to taste it."

"I'm tasting it," the Colonel said. "Now I will drink a full glass."

"You're a good man."

"Thank you," the Colonel said. "I'll remember that all week and try to be one." Then he said, "*Gran Maestro.*"

When the *Gran Maestro* came over, happy, conspiratorial, and ignoring his ulcers, the Colonel asked him, "What sort of meat have you that is worth our eating?"

"I'm not quite sure I know," the *Gran Maestro* said. "But I will check. Your compatriot is over there in hearing distance. He would not let me seat him in the far corner."

"Good," the Colonel said. "We'll give him something to write about."

"He writes every night, you know. I've heard that from one of my colleagues at his hotel."

"Good," the Colonel said. "That shows that he is industrious even if he has outlived his talents."

"We are all industrious," the *Gran Maestro* said.

"In different ways."

"I will go and check on what there actually is among the meats."

"Check carefully."

"I am industrious."

"You are also damn sagacious."

The *Gran Maestro* was gone and the girl said, "He is a lovely man and I love how fond he is of you."

"We are good friends," the Colonel said. "I hope he has a good steak for you."

"There is one very good steak," the *Gran Maestro* said,

reappearing.

"You take it, Daughter. I get them all the time at the mess. Do you want it rare?"

"Quite rare, please."

"*Al sangue,*" the Colonel said, "as John said when he spoke to the waiter in French. *Crudo, bleu,* or just make it very rare."

"It's rare," the *Gran Maestro* said. "And you, my Colonel?"

"The scaloppine with Marsala, and the cauliflower braised with butter. Plus an artichoke vinaigrette if you can find one. What do you want, Daughter?"

"Mashed potatoes and a plain salad."

"You're a growing girl."

"Yes. But I should not grow too much nor in the wrong directions."

"I think that handles it," the Colonel said. "What about a fiasco of Valpolicella?"

"We don't have fiascos. This is a good hotel, you know. It comes in bottles."

"I forgot," the Colonel said. "Do you remember when it cost thirty centesimi the liter?"

"And we would throw the empty fiascos at the station guards from the troop trains?"

"And we would throw all the left over grenades away and bounce them down the hillside coming back from the Grappa?"

"And they would think there was a breakthrough when they would see the bursts and you never shaved, and we wore the *fiamme nere* on the grey, open jackets with the grey sweaters?"

"And I drank grappa and could not even feel the taste?"

"We must have been tough then," the Colonel said.

"We were tough then," the *Gran Maestro* said. "We were bad boys then, and you were the worst of the bad boys."

"Yes," the Colonel said. "I think we were rather bad boys. You forgive this will you, Daughter?"

“You haven’t a picture of them, have you?”

“No. There weren’t any pictures except with Mr. d’Annunzio in them. Also most of the people turned out badly.”

“Except for us,” the *Gran Maestro* said. “Now I must go and see how the steak marches.”

The Colonel, who was a sub-lieutenant again now, riding in a camion, his face dust, until only his metallic eyes showed, and they were red-rimmed and sore, sat thinking.

The three key points, he thought. The massif of Grappa with Assalone and Pertica and the hill I do not remember the name of on the right. That was where I grew up, he thought, and all the nights I woke sweating, dreaming I would not be able to get them out of the trucks. They should not have gotten out, ever, of course. But what a trade it is.

“In our army, you know,” he told the girl, “practically no Generals have ever fought. It is quite strange and the top organization dislikes those who have fought.”

“Do Generals really fight?”

“Oh yes. When they are captains and lieutenants. Later, except in retreats, it is rather stupid.”

“Did you fight much? I know you did. But tell me.”

“I fought enough to be classified as a fool by the great thinkers.”

“Tell me.”

“When I was a boy, I fought against Erwin Rommel half way from Cortina to the Grappa, where we held. He was a captain then and I was an acting captain; really a sub-lieutenant.”

“Did you know him?”

“No. Not until after the war when we could talk together. He was very nice and I liked him. We used to ski together.”

“Did you like many Germans?”

“Very many. Ernst Udet I liked the best.”

“But they were in the wrong.”

“Of course. But who has not been?”

“I never could like them or take such a tolerant attitude as you do, since they killed my father and burned our villa on the Brenta and the day I saw a German officer shooting pigeons with a shotgun in the Piazza San Marco.”

“I understand,” the Colonel said. “But please, Daughter, you try to understand my attitude too. When we have killed so many we can afford to be kind.”

“How many have you killed?”

“One hundred and twenty-two sures. Not counting possibles.”

“You had no remorse?”

“Never.”

“Nor bad dreams about it?”

“Nor bad dreams. But usually strange ones. Combat dreams, always, for a while after combat. But then strange dreams about places mostly. We live by accidents of terrain, you know. And terrain is what remains in the dreaming part of your mind.”

“Don’t you ever dream about me?”

“I try to. But I can’t.”

“Maybe the portrait will help.”

“I hope so,” the Colonel said. “Please don’t forget to remind me to give back the stones.”

“Please don’t be cruel.”

“I have my small necessities of honor in the same proportions as we have our great and enveloping love. You cannot have the one without the other.”

“But you could give me privileges.”

“You have them,” the Colonel said. “The stones are in my pocket.”

The *Gran Maestro* came then with the steak and the scaloppine and the vegetables. They were brought by a sleek-headed boy who believed in nothing; but was trying hard to be a good second waiter. He was a member of the Order. The *Gran Maestro* served adroitly and with respect both for the food, and those that were to

eat it.

"Now eat," he said.

"Uncork that Valpolicella," he said to the boy who had the eyes of an unbelieving spaniel.

"What do you have on that character?" the Colonel asked him, referring to his pitted compatriot, sitting chawing at his food, while the elderly woman with him ate with suburban grace.

"You should tell me. Not me you."

"I never saw him before today," the Colonel said. "He's hard to take with food."

"He condescends to me. He speaks bad Italian assiduously. He goes everywhere in Baedeker, and he has no taste in either food or wine. The woman is nice. I believe she is his aunt. But I have no real information."

"He looks like something we could do without."

"I believe we could. In a pinch."

"Does he speak of us?"

"He asked me who you were. He was familiar with the Contessa's name and had book-visited several palaces that had belonged to the family. He was impressed by your name, Madam, which I gave to impress him."

"Do you think he will put us in a book?"

"I'm sure of it. He puts everything in a book."

"We ought to be in a book," the Colonel said. "Would you mind, Daughter?"

"Of course not," the girl said. "But I'd rather Dante wrote it."

"Dante isn't around," the Colonel said.

"Can you tell me anything about the war?" the girl asked. "Anything that I should be permitted to know?"

"Sure. Anything you like."

"What was General Eisenhower like?"

"Strictly the Epworth League. Probably that is unjust too. Also complicated by various other influences. An excellent politician.

Political General. Very able at it."

"The other leaders?"

"Let us not name them. They've named themselves enough in their memoirs. Mostly extremely plausible out of something called the Rotary Club that you would never have heard of. In this club, they have enameled buttons with their first names and you are fined if you call them by their proper names. Never fought. Ever."

"Were there no good ones?"

"Yes, many. Bradley, the schoolmaster, and many others. Give you Lightning Joe as a good one. Very good."

"Who was he?"

"Commanded the Seventh Corps when I was there. Very sound. Rapid. Accurate. Now chief of staff."

"But what about the great leaders we heard about like the Generals Montgomery and Patton?"

"Forget them, Daughter. Monty was a character who needed fifteen to one to move, and then moved tardily."

"I always supposed he was a great General."

"He was not," the Colonel said. "The worst part was he knew it. I have seen him come into an hotel and change from his proper uniform into a crowd-catching kit to go out in the evening to animate the populace."

"Do you dislike him?"

"No. I simply think he is a British General. Whatever that means. And don't you use the term."

"But he beat General Rommel."

"Yes. And you don't think anyone else had softened him up? And who can't win with fifteen to one? When we fought here, when we were boys, the *Gran Maestro* and I, we won for one whole year with three to four against one and we won each one. Three main bad ones. That is why we can make jokes and not be solemn. We had something over one hundred and forty thousand dead that year. That is why we can speak gaily and without pomposity."

“It is such a sad science; if it is a science,” the girl said. “I hate the war monuments, though I respect them.”

“I do not like them either. Nor the process which led to their construction. Have you ever seen that end of the thing?”

“No. But I would like to know.”

“Better not know,” the Colonel said. “Eat your steak before it gets cold and forgive me for talking about my trade.”

“I hate it but I love it.”

“I believe we share the same emotions,” the Colonel said. “But what is my pitted compatriot thinking three tables down?”

“About his next book, or about what it says in Baedeker.”

“Should we go and ride in a gondola in the wind after we have dined?”

“That would be lovely.”

“Should we tell the pitted man that we are going? I think he has the same pits on his heart and in his soul and maybe in his curiosity.”

“We tell him nothing,” the girl said. “The *Gran Maestro* can convey him any information we wish.”

Then she chewed well and solidly on her steak and said, “Do you think it is true that men make their own faces after fifty?”

“I hope not. Because I would not sign for mine.”

“You,” she said. “You.”

“Is the steak good?” the Colonel asked.

“It’s wonderful. How are your scaloppine?”

“Very tender and the sauce is not at all sweet. Do you like the vegetables?”

“The cauliflower is almost crisp; like celery.”

“We should have some celery. But I don’t think there is any or the *Gran Maestro* would have brought it.”

“Don’t we have fun with food? Imagine if we could eat together always.”

“I’ve suggested it.”

“Let’s not talk about that.”

“All right,” the Colonel said. “I’ve made a decision too. I’m going to chuck the army and live in this town, very simply, on my retirement pay.”

“That’s wonderful. How do you look in civilian clothes?”

“You’ve seen me.”

“I know it, my dear. I said it for a joke. You make rough jokes sometimes too, you know.”

“I’ll look all right. That is if you have a tailor here who can cut clothes.”

“There isn’t one here, but there is in Rome. Can we drive together to Rome to get the clothes?”

“Yes. And we will live outside the town at Viterbo and only go in for the fittings and for dinner in the evening. Then we’ll drive back in the night.”

“Will we see cinema people and speak about them with can dour and perhaps not have a drink with them?”

“We’ll see them by the thousands.”

“Will we see them being married for the second and third time and then being blessed by the Pope?”

“If you go in for that kind of thing.”

“I don’t,” the girl said. “That’s one reason that I cannot marry you.”

“I see,” the Colonel said. “Thank you.”

“But I will love you, whatever that means, and you and I know what it means very well, as long as either of us is alive and after.”

“I don’t think you can love very much after you, yourself, are dead,” the Colonel said.

He started to eat the artichoke, taking a leaf at a time, and dipping them, heavy side down, into the deep saucer of *sauce vinaigrette*.

“I don’t know whether you can either,” the girl said. “But I will try. Don’t you feel better to be loved?”

“Yes,” the Colonel said. “I feel as though I were out on some bare-assed hill where it was too rocky to dig, and the rocks all solid, but with nothing jutting, and no bulges, and all of a sudden instead of being there naked, I was armoured. Armoured and the eighty-eights not there.”

“You should tell that to our writer friend with the craters of the moon face so he could write it tonight.”

“I ought to tell it to Dante if he was around,” the Colonel, suddenly gone as rough as the sea when a line squall comes up, said. “I’d tell him what I’d do if I were shifted, or ascended, into an armoured vehicle under such circumstances.”

Just then the Barone Alvarito came into the dining room. He was looking for them and, being a hunter, he saw them instantly.

He came over to the table and kissed Renata’s hand, saying, “*Ciao,* Renata.” He was almost tall, beautifully built in his town clothes, and he was the shyest man the Colonel had ever known. He was not shy from ignorance, nor from being ill at ease, nor from any defect. He was basically shy, as certain animals are, such as the Bongo that you will never see in the jungle, and that must be hunted with dogs.

“My Colonel,” he said. He smiled as only the truly shy can smile.

It was not the easy grin of the confident, nor the quick slashing smile of the extremely durable and the wicked. It had no relation with the poised, intently used smile of the courtesan or the politician. It was the strange, rare smile which rises from the deep, dark pit, deeper than a well. deep as a deep mine, that is within them.

“I can only stay a moment. I carne to tell you that it looks quite good for the shoot. The ducks are corning in heavily from the north. There are many big ducks. The ones you like,” he smiled again.

“Sit down Alvarito. Please.”

“No,” the Barone Alvarito said. “We can meet at the Garage at two-thirty if you like? You have your car?”

"Yes."

"That makes it very good. Leaving at that hour, we will have time to see the ducks in the evening."

"Splendid," the Colonel said.

"*Ciao,* then, Renata. Good-bye, my Colonel. Until two-thirty."

"We knew each other as children," the girl said. "But he was about three years older. He was born very old."

"Yes. I know. He is a good friend of mine."

"Do you think your compatriot has looked him up in Baedeker? "

"I wouldn't know," the Colonel said. "*Gran Maestro,*" he asked, "did my illustrious compatriot' look up the Barone in Baedeker?"

"Truly, my Colonel. I have not seen him pull his Baedeker during the meal."

"Give him full marks," the Colonel said. "Now look. I believe that the Valpolicella is better when it is newer. It is not a *grand vin* and bottling it and putting years on it only adds sediment. Do you agree?"

"I agree."

"Then what should we do?"

"My Colonel, you know that in a Great Hotel, wine must cost money. You cannot get Pinard at the Ritz. But I suggest that we get several fiascos of the good. You can say they come from the Contessa Renata's estates and are a gift. Then I will have them decanted for you. This way, we will have better wine and make an impressive saving. I will explain it to the manager if you like. He is a very good man."

"Explain it to him," the Colonel said. "He's not a man who drinks labels either."

"Agreed."

"In the meantime you might as well drink this. It is very good, you know."

"It is," the Colonel said. "But it isn't *Chambertin.*"

"What did we use to drink?"

"Anything," the Colonel said. "But now I seek perfection. Or, rather, not absolute perfection, but perfection for my money."

"I seek it, too," the *Gran Maestro* said. "But rather vainly!'

"What do you want for the end of the meal?"

"Cheese," the Colonel said. "What do you want, Daughter?"

The girl had been quiet and a little withdrawn, since she had seen Alvarito. Something was going on in her mind, and it was an excellent mind. But, momentarily, she was not with them.

"Cheese," she said. "Please."

"What cheese?"

"Bring them all and we'll look at them," the Colonel said.

The *Gran Maestro* left and the Colonel said, "What's the matter, Daughter?"

"Nothing. Never anything. Always nothing."

"You might as well pull out of it. We haven't time for such luxuries."

"No. I agree. We will devote ourselves to the cheese."

"Do I have to take it like a corn cob?"

"No," she said, not understanding the colloquialism, but understanding exactly what was meant, since it was she who had been doing the thinking. "Put your right hand in your pocket."

"Good," the Colonel said. "I will."

He put his right hand in his pocket and felt what was there, first with the tips of his fingers, and then with the insides of his fingers, and then with the palm of his hand; his split hand.

"I'm sorry," she said. "And now we begin the good part of it again. We will dedicate ourselves to the cheese with happiness."

"Excellent," the Colonel said. "I wonder what cheeses he has?"

"Tell me about the last war," the girl said. "Then we will ride in our gondola in the cold wind."

"It was not very interesting," the Colonel said. "To us, of course, such things are always interesting. But there were only three,

maybe four, phases that really interested me."

"Why?"

"We were fighting a beaten enemy whose communications had been destroyed. We destroyed many divisions on paper, but they were ghost divisions. Not real ones. They had been destroyed by our tactical aviation before they ever got up. It was only really difficult in Normandy, due to the terrain, and when we made the break for Georgie Patton's armour to go through and held it open on both sides."

"How do you make a break for armour to go through? Tell me, please."

"First you fight to take a town that controls all the main roads. Call the town St. Lo. Then you have to open up the roads by taking other towns and villages. The enemy has a main line of resistance, but he cannot bring up his divisions to counterattack because the fighter-bombers catch them on the roads. Does this bore you? It bores the hell out of me."

"It does not bore me. I never heard it said understandably before."

"Thank you," the Colonel said. "Are you sure you want more of the sad science?"

"Please," she said. "I love you, you know, and I would like to share it with you."

"Nobody shares this trade with anybody," the Colonel told her. "I'm just telling you how it works. I can insert anecdotes to make it interesting, or plausible."

"Insert some, please."

"The taking of Paris was nothing," the Colonel said. "It was only an emotional experience. Not a military operation. We killed a number of typists and the screen the Germans had left, as they always do, to cover their withdrawal. I suppose they figured they were not going to need a hell of a lot of office workers anymore and they left them as soldiers."

“Was it not a great thing?”

“The people of Leclerc, another jerk of the third or fourth water, whose death I celebrated with a magnum of Perrier-Jouet Brut 1942, shot a great number of rounds to make it seem important and because we had given them what they had to shoot with. But it was not important.”

“Did you take part in it?”

“Yes,” the Colonel said. “I think I could safely say, yes.” “Did you have no great impressions of it? After all, it was Paris and not everyone has taken it.”

“The French, themselves, had taken it four days before. But the grand plan of what we called SHAEF, Supreme, get that word, Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, which included all the military politicians of the rear, and who wore a badge of shame in the form of a flaming something, while we wore a four-leafed clover as a designation, and for luck, had a master plan for the envelopment of the city. So we could not simply take it.

“Also we had to wait for the possible arrival of General or Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery who was unable to close, even, the gap at Falaise and found the going rather sticky and could not quite get there on time.”

“You must have missed him,” the girl said.

“Oh, we did,” the Colonel said. “No end.”

“But was there nothing noble or truly happy about it?”

“Surely,” the Colonel told her. “We fought from Bas Meudon, and then the Porte de Saint Cloud, through streets I knew and loved and we had no deads and did as little damage as possible. At the Etoile I took Elsa Maxwell’s butler prisoner. It was a very complicated operation. He had been denounced as a Japanese sniper. A new thing. Several Parisians were alleged to have been killed by him. So we sent three men to the roof where he had taken refuge and he was an Indo-China boy.”

“I begin to understand a little. But it is disheartening.”

“It is always disheartening as hell. But you are not supposed to have a heart in this trade.”

“But do you think it was the same in the time of the Grand Captains?”

“I am quite sure it was worse.”

“But you got your hand honorably?”

“Yes. Very honorably. On a rocky, bare-assed hill.”

“Please let me feel it,” she said.

“Just be careful around the center,” the Colonel said. “It’s split there and it still cracks open:’

“You ought to write,” the girl said. “I mean it truly. So someone would know about such things.”

“No,” the Colonel disagreed. “I have not the talent for it and I know too much. Almost any liar writes more convincingly than a man who was there.”

“But other soldiers wrote.”

“Yes. Maurice de Saxe. Frederick the Great. Mr. T’sun Su.”

“But soldiers of our time.”

“You use the word our with facility. I like it though.”

“But didn’t many modern soldiers write?”

“Many. But did you ever read them?”

“No. I have read mostly the classics and I read the illustrated papers for the scandals. Also, I read your letters.”

“Burn them,” the Colonel said. “They are worthless.”

“Please. Don’t be rough.”

“I won’t. What can I tell you that won’t bore you?”

“Tell me about when you were a General.”

“Oh, that,” he said and motioned to the *Gran Maestro* to bring Champagne. It was Roederer Brut ’42, and he loved it.

“When you are a general you live in a trailer and your Chief of Staff lives in a trailer, and you have bourbon whisky when other people do not have it. Your G’s live in the C.P. I’d tell you what G’s are, but it would bore you. I’d tell you about GI, G2, G3, G4, G5

and on the other side there is always Kraut-6. But it would bore you. On the other hand, you have a map covered with plastic material, and on this you have three regiments composed of three battalions each. It is all marked in colored pencil.

"You have boundary lines so that when the battalions cross their boundaries they will not then fight each other. Each battalion is composed of five companies. All should be good, but some are good, and some are not so good. Also you have divisional artillery and a battalion of tanks and many spare parts. You live by co-ordinates."

He paused while the *Gran Maestro* poured the Roederer Brut '42.

"From Corps," he translated, unlovingly, *cuerpo d'Armata,* "they tell you what you must do, and then you decide how to do it. You dictate the orders or, most often, you give them by telephone. You ream out people you respect, to make them do what you know is fairly impossible, but is ordered. Also, you have to think hard, stay awake late and get up early."

"And you won't write about this? Not even to please me?"

"No," said the Colonel. "Boys who were sensitive and cracked and kept all their valid first impressions of their day of battle, or their three days, or even their four, write books. They are good books but can be dull if you have been there. Then others write to profit quickly from the war they never fought in. The ones who ran back to tell the news. The news is hardly exact. But they ran quickly with it. Professional writers who had jobs that prevented them from fighting wrote of combat that they could not understand, as though they had been there. I do not know what category of sin that comes under.

"Also a nylon-smooth Captain of the Navy who could not command a catboat wrote about the intimate side of the truly Big Picture. Everybody will write their book sooner or later. We might even draw a good one. But I don't write, Daughter."

He motioned for the *Gran Maestro* to fill the glasses.

"*Gran Maestro,*" he said. "Do you like to fight?"

"No."

"But we fought?"

"Yes. Too much."

"How is your health?"

"Wonderful except for the ulcers and a small cardiac condition."

"No," the Colonel said, and his heart rose and he felt it choke him. "You only told me about the ulcers."

"Well you know now," the *Gran Maestro* said and did not finish the sentence and he smiled his best and clearest smile that came as solid as the sun rises.

"How many times?"

The *Gran Maestro* held up two fingers as a man might do giving odds where he had credit, and all the betting was on the nod.

"I'm ahead of you," the Colonel said. "But let's not be macabre. Ask Donna Renata if she wishes more of this excellent wine."

"You did not tell me there were more," the girl said. "You owe it to me to tell me."

"There has been nothing since we were together last."

"Do you think it breaks for me? If so, I would come and simply be with you and care for you."

"It's just a muscle," the Colonel said. "Only it is the main muscle. It works as perfectly as a Rolex Oyster Perpetual. The trouble is you cannot send it to the Rolex representative when it goes wrong. When it stops, you just do not know the time. You're dead."

"Don't please talk about it."

"You asked me," the Colonel said.

"And that pitted man with the caricature face? He has no such thing?"

"Of course not," the Colonel told her. "If he is a mediocre writer he will live forever."

"But you're not a writer. How do you know this?"

“No,” the Colonel said. “By the grace of God. But I’ve read several books. We have a lot of time to read when we are unmarried. Not as much as the merchant marine maybe. But plenty. I can tell one writer from another and I tell you that a mediocre writer has a long span of life. They ought to all draw longevity pay.”

“Could you tell me any anecdotes, and we stop talking about this, which is my true sorrow?”

“I can tell you hundreds of them. All true.”

“Tell me just one. Then we will finish this wine and then go in the gondola.”

“Do you think you will be warm enough?”

“Oh, I’m sure I will.”

“I don’t know what to tell you,” the Colonel said. “Everything about war bores those who have not made it. Except the tales of the liars.”

“I would like to know about the taking of Paris.”

“Why? Because I told you that you looked like Marie Antoinette in the tumbril?”

“No. I was complimented by that and I know we are a little alike in profile. But I have never been in any tumbril, and I would like to hear about Paris. When you love someone and he is your hero, you like to hear about the places and the things.”

“Please turn your head,” the Colonel said, “and I will tell you. *Gran Maestro* is there anymore in that wretched bottle?”

“No,” the *Gran Maestro* answered.

“Then bring another.”

“I have one already iced.”

“Good. Serve it. Now, Daughter, we parted from the column of the General Leclerc at Clamart. They went to Montrouge and the Porte d’Orleans and we went directly to Bas Meudon and secured the bridge of the Porte de Saint Cloud. Is this too technical and does it bore you?”

“No.”

“It would be better with a map.”

“Go on.”

“We secured the bridge and established a bridge-head on the other side of the river and we threw the Germans, living and dead, who had defended the bridge, into the Seine River,” he stopped. “It was a token defense of course. They should have blown it. We threw all these Germans into the River Seine. They were nearly all office workers, I believe.”

“Go on.”

“The next morning, we were informed that the Germans had strong points at various places, and artillery on Mount Valérien, and that tanks were roaming the streets. A portion of this was true. We were also requested not to enter too rapidly as the General Leclerc was to take the city. I complied with this request and entered as slowly as I could.”

“How do you do that?”

“You hold up your attack two hours and you drink champagne whenever it is offered to you by patriots, collaborators or enthusiasts.”

“But was there nothing wonderful nor great, the way it is in books?”

“Of course. There was the city itself. The people were very happy. Old general officers were walking about in their mothballed uniforms. We were very happy, too, not to have to fight.”

“Did you not have to fight at all?”

“Only three times. Then not seriously.”

“But was that all you had to fight to take such a city?”

“Daughter, we fought twelve times from Rambouillet to enter the city. But only two of them were worth describing as fights. Those at Toussus Ie Noble and at LeBuc. The rest was the necessary garnishing of a dish. I really did not need to fight at all except at those two places.”

“Tell me some true things about fighting.”

“Tell me you love me.”

“I love you,” the girl said. “You can publish it in the Gazzettino if you like. I love your hard, flat body and your strange eyes that frighten me when they become wicked. I love your hand and all your other wounded places.”

“I better try to tell you something pretty good,” the Colonel said. “First I can tell you that I love you Period.”

“Why don’t you buy some good glass?” the girl asked, suddenly. “We could go to Murano together.”

“I don’t know anything about glass.”

“I could teach you. It would be fun.”

“We lead too nomadic a life for good glass.”

“But when you retire and live here.”

“We’ll get some then.”

“I wish that that was now.”

“So do I, except that I go duck shooting tomorrow and that tonight is tonight.”

“Can I come duck shooting?”

“Only if Alvarito asks you.”

“I can make him ask me.”

“I doubt that.”

“It isn’t polite to doubt what your Daughter says when she is old enough not to lie.”

“All right, Daughter. I withdraw the doubt.”

“Thank you. For that I will not go and be a nuisance. I will stay in Venice and go to Mass with Mother and my aunt and my great-aunt and visit my poors. I am an only child so I have many duties.”

“I always wondered what you did.”

“That’s what I do. Also, I’ll have my maid wash my head and give me a manicure and a pedicure.”

“You can’t do that because the shoot is on Sunday.”

“Then I’ll do that on Monday. On Sunday, I will read all the

illustrated papers including the outrageous ones."

"Maybe they'll have pictures of Miss Bergman. Do you still want to be like her?"

"Not anymore," the girl said. "I want to be like me only much, much better and I want to have you love me."

"Also," she said suddenly and unmaskingly, "I want to be like you. Can I be like you a little while tonight?"

"Of course," the Colonel said. "In what town are we , anyway?"

"Venice," she said. "The best town, I think."

"I quite agree. And thank you for not asking me for more war episodes."

"Oh you are going to have to tell them to me later."

"*Have to?*" the Colonel said and the cruelty and resolution showed in his strange eyes as clearly as when the hooded muzzle of the gun of a tank swings toward you.

"Did you say *have to,* Daughter?"

"I said it. But I did not mean it in that way. Or, if I did wrong, I am sorry. I meant will you please tell me more true episodes later? And explain me the things I do not understand? "

"You can use *have* to if you want, Daughter. The hell with it."

He smiled and his eyes were as kind as they ever were, which was not too kind, as he knew. But there was nothing now that he could do about it except to try to be kind to his last and true and only love.

"I don't really mind, Daughter. Please believe me. I know about command and, at your age, I used to take considerable pleasure in exercising it."

"But I don't want to command," the girl said. In spite of her resolution not to cry, her eyes were wet. "I wish to serve you."

"I know. But you wish to command, too. There's nothing wrong in that. All people such as us have it."

"Thank you for the such as us."

"It wasn't hard to say," the Colonel said. "Daughter," he added.

Just then the concierge came to the table and said, “Excuse me, my Colonel. There is a man outside, I believe he is a servant of yours, my Lady, with quite a large package which he says is for the Colonel. Should I keep it in the storeroom or have it sent to your room?”

“To my room,” the Colonel said.

“Please,” the girl said. “Can’t we look at it here? We don’t care about anyone here, do we?”

“Have it unwrapped and brought in here.”

“Very good.”

“Later, you may have it taken with great care to my room and have it wrapped, solidly, for transport at noon tomorrow.”

“Very good, my Colonel.”

“Are you excited to see it?” the girl asked.

“Very,” said the Colonel. “*Gran Maestro* some more of that Roederer, please, and please place a chair in such a position that we may view a portrait. We are devotees of the pictorial arts.”

“There’s no more Roederer cold,” the *Gran Maestro* said. “But if you would like some Perrier-Jouet—”

“Bring it,” the Colonel said and added, “Please.”

“I don’t talk like Georgie Patton,” the Colonel told her. “I don’t have to. And besides he’s dead.”

“Poor man.”

“Yes, Poor man all his life. Although quite rich in money and with a lot of armour.”

“Do you have anything against armour?”

“Yes. Most of the people inside of it. It makes men into bullies which is the first step toward cowardice; true cowardice I mean. Perhaps it is a little complicated by claustrophobia.”

Then he looked at her and smiled and regretted taking her beyond her depth, as you might take a new swimmer on a shallow, shelving beach, into too deep water; and he sought to reassure her.

“You forgive me, Daughter. Much of what I say is un-just. But it

is truer than the things that you will read in Generals' memoirs. After a man gets one star, or more, the truth becomes as difficult for him to attain as the Holy Grail was in our ancestors' time."

"But you were a general officer."

"Not for too damn long," the Colonel said. "Now Captains," the General said, "they know the exact truth and they can mostly tell it to you. If they can't, you reclassify them."

"Would you reclassify me if I lied?"

"It would depend on what you lied about."

"I'm not going to lie about anything. I don't want to be reclassified. It sounds horrible."

"It is," the Colonel said. "And you send them back to have it done to them with eleven different copies of why it should be done, every one of which you sign."

"Did you reclassify many?"

"Plenty."

The concierge came into the room with the portrait, carrying it in its big frame, much as a ship moves when she is carrying too much sail.

"Get two chairs," the Colonel said to the second waiter, "and put them there. See that the canvas does not touch the chairs. And hold it so it does not slip."

Then to the girl he said, "We'll have to change that frame."

"I know," she said. "It was not my choice. Take it unframed with you and we'll choose a good frame next week. Now look at it. Not at the frame. At what it says, or does not say, of me."

It was a beautiful portrait; neither cold, nor snobbish, nor stylised, nor modern. It was the way you would want your girl painted if Tintoretto were still around and, if he were not around, you settled for Velasquez. It was not the way either of them painted. It was simply a splendid portrait painted, as they sometimes are, in our time.

"It's wonderful," the Colonel said. "It is truly lovely!"

The concierge and the second waiter were holding it, and looking at it around the edges. The *Gran Maestro* was admiring fully. The American, two tables down, was looking at it with his journalistic eyes, wondering who painted it. The back of the canvas was to the other diners.

"It is wonderful," the Colonel said. "But you can't give me that."

"I already have," the girl said. "I'm sure my hair was never that long over my shoulders."

"I think it probably was."

"I could try to let it get that long if you want."

"Try," the Colonel said. "You great beauty you. I love you very much. You and you portrayed on canvas."

"Tell the waiters if you like. I'm sure it won't come as a great shock to them."

"Take the canvas upstairs to my room," the Colonel said to the concierge. "Thank you very much for bringing it in. If the price is right, I am going to buy it."

"The price is right," the girl said to him. "Should we have them take it and the chairs down and make a special showing of it for your compatriot? The *Gran Maestro* could tell him the address of the painter and he could visit the picturesque studio."

"It is a very lovely portrait," the *Gran Maestro* said. "But it should be taken to the room. One should never let Roederer or Perrier-Jouet do the talking."

"Take it to the room, please."

"You said please without a pause before it."

"Thank you," the Colonel said. "I am very deeply moved by the portrait and I am not entirely responsible for what I say."

"Let's neither of us be responsible."

"Agreed," the Colonel said. "The *Gran Maestro* is really very responsible. He always was."

"No," the girl said. "I think he did not only from responsibility but from malice. We all have malice, you know, of some kind or

another in this town. I think perhaps he did not want the man to have even a journalist's look into happiness."

"Whatever that is."

"I learned that phrase from you, and now you have re-learned it back from me."

"That's the way it goes," the Colonel said. "What you win in Boston you lose in Chicago."

"I don't understand that at all."

"Too hard to explain," the Colonel said. Then, "No. Of course it isn't. Making things clear is my main trade. The hell with being too hard to explain. It is like professional football, *calcio,* What you win in Milano you lose in Torino."

"I don't care about football."

"Neither do I," the Colonel said. "Especially not about the Army and Navy game and when the very high brass speaks in terms of American football so they can understand, themselves, what they are talking of."

"I think we will have a good time tonight. Even under the circumstances, whatever they are."

"Should we take this new bottle in the gondola?"

"Yes," the girl said. "But with deep glasses. I'll tell the *Gran Maestro.* Let's get our coats and go."

"Good. I'll take some of this medicine and sign for the G.M. and we'll go."

"I wish it was me taking the medicine instead of you."

"I'm glad as hell it isn't," the Colonel said. "Should we pick our gondola or have them bring one to the landing?"

"Let's gamble and have them bring one to the landing. What do we have to lose?"

"Nothing, I guess. Probably nothing."

Chapter XIII

They went out the side door of the hotel to the *imbarcadero* and the wind hit them. The light from the hotel shone on the blackness of the gondola and made the water green. She looks as lovely as a good horse or as a racing shell, the Colonel thought. Why have I never seen a gondola before? What hand or eye framed that darked symmetry?

"Where should we go?" the girl asked.

Her hair, in the light from the hotel door and window, as she stood on the dock by the black gondola, was blowing back in the wind, so she looked like the figurehead on a ship. The rest of it, too, the Colonel thought.

"Let's just ride through the park," the Colonel said. "Or through the Bois with the top down. Let him take us out to Armenonville."

"Will we go to Paris?"

"Sure," the Colonel said. "Tell him to take us for an hour where the going is easiest. I don't want to drive him into that wind."

"The tide is quite high with this wind," the girl said. "Some of our places he couldn't get under the bridges. May I tell him where to go?"

"Of course, Daughter."

"Stow that ice bucket aboard," the Colonel said to the second waiter, who had come out with them.

"The *Gran Maestro* said to tell you, as you embarked, that this bottle of wine was his present."

"Thank him properly and tell him he can't do that." "He had better go into the wind a little first," the girl said. "Then I know

how he should go."

"The *Gran Maestro* sent this," the second waiter said.

It was a folded, old U. S. O. D. blanket. Renata was talking to the gondoliere, her hair blowing. The gondoliere wore a heavy blue navy sweater and he was bareheaded too.

"Thank him," the Colonel said.

He slipped a bill into the second waiter's hand. The second waiter returned it. "You already made the notation on the check. Neither you nor I nor the *Gran Maestro* are starving."

"What about the moglie and the bambini?"

"I don't have that. Your mediums smacked our house in Treviso."

"I'm sorry."

"You needn't be," the second waiter said. "You were a foot soldier as I was."

"Permit me to be sorry."

"Sure," the second waiter said. "And what the hell difference does it make? Be happy, my Colonel, and be happy, my Lady."

They got down into the gondola and there was the same magic, as always, of the light hull, and the sudden displacement that you made, and then the trimming in the dark privacy, and then the second trimming, as the *gondoliere* started to scull, laying her partly on her side so that he would have more control.

"Now," the girl said. "We are in our home and I love .you. Please kiss me and put all love into it."

The Colonel held her close, with her head thrown back and kissed her until there was nothing left of the kiss but desperation.

"I love you."

"Whatever that means," she interrupted.

"I love you and I know whatever that means. The picture is lovely. But there is no word for what you are."

"Wild?" she said. "Or careless or unkempt?"

"No."

“The last was one of the first words I learned from my governess. It means you do not comb your hair enough. Neglectful is when you do not brush one hundred strokes at night.”

“I’m going to run my hand through it and make it unkempter still.”

“Your hurt hand?”

“Yes.”

“We’re sitting on the wrong sides for that. Change over.”

“Good. That is a sensible order couched in simple language and easily understood.”

It was fun moving over, trying not to disturb the balance of the gondola, but having to trim again carefully.

“Now,” she said. “But hold me tightly with the other arm.”

“You know just what you want?”

“I do indeed. Is it unmaidenly? I learned that word too from my governess.”

“No,” he said. “It’s lovely. Pull up the blanket good and feel that wind.”

“It’s from the high mountains.”

“Yes. And beyond there it’s from somewhere else.”

The Colonel heard the slap of the waves, and he felt the wind come sharply, and the rough familiarity of the blanket, and then he felt the girl cold-warm and lovely and with upraised breasts that his left hand coasted lightly over. Then he ran his bad hand through her hair once, twice, and three times and then he kissed her, and it was worse than desperation.

“Please,” she said, from almost underneath the blanket. “Let me kiss now.”

“No,” he said. “Me again.”

The wind was very cold and lashed their faces but under the blanket there was no wind nor nothing; only his ruined hand that searched for the island in the great river with the high steep banks.

“That’s it,” she said.

He kissed her then and he searched for the island, finding it and losing it, and then finding it for good. For good and for bad, he thought, and for good and for all.

"My darling," he said. "My well beloved. Please."

"No. Just hold me very tight and hold the high ground, too."

The Colonel said nothing, because he was assisting, or had made an act of presence, at the only mystery that he believed in except the occasional bravery of man.

"Please don't move," the girl said. "Then move a great amount."

The Colonel, lying under the blanket in the wind, knowing it is only what man does for woman that he retains, except what he does for his fatherland or his motherland, however you get the reading, proceeded.

"Please darling," the girl said. "I don't think I can stand it."

"Don't think of anything. Don't think of anything at all."

"I'm not."

"Don't think."

"Oh please let's not talk."

"Is it right?"

"You know."

"You're sure."

"Oh please not talk. Please."

Yes, he thought. Please and please again.

She said nothing, and neither did he, and when the great bird had flown far out of the closed window of the gondola, and was lost and gone, neither of them said anything. He held her head lightly with his good arm and the other arm held the high ground now.

"Please put it where it should be," she said. "Your hand."

"Should we?"

"No. Just hold me tight and try to love me true."

"I love you true," he said, and just then the gondola turned to the left, quite sharply, and the wind was on his right cheek, and he said, with his old eyes catching the outline of the Palace where they

turned, and noting it, “You’re in the lee now, Daughter.”

“But it is too soon now. Don’t you know how a woman feels?”

“No. Only what you tell me.”

“Thank you for the you. But don’t you really know?”

“No. I never asked, I guess.”

“Guess now,” she said. “And please wait until after we have gone under the second bridge.”

“Take a glass of this,” the Colonel said, reaching ac-curately and well for the champagne bucket with the ice, and uncorking the bottle the *Gran Maestro* had uncorked, and then placed a common wine cork in.

“This is good for you, Daughter. It is good for all the ills that all of us have, and for all sadness and indecision.”

“I have none of those,” she said, speaking grammatically as her governess had taught her. “I am just a woman, or a girl, or whatever that is, doing whatever it is she should not do. Let’s do it again, please, now I am in the lee.”

“Where is the island now and in what river?”

“You are making the discovery. I am only the unknown country.”

“Not too unknown,” the Colonel said.

“Please don’t be rude,” the girl said. “And please attack gently and with the same attack as before.”

“It’s no attack,” the Colonel said. “It is something else.”

“Whatever it is, whatever it is, while I’m still in the lee.”

“Yes,” the Colonel said. “Yes, now if you want, or will accept from kindness.”

“Please, yes.”

She talks like a gentle cat, though the poor cats cannot speak, the Colonel thought. But then he stopped thinking and he did not think for a long time.

The gondola now was In one of the secondary canals. When it had turned from the Grand Canal, the wind had swung it so the

gondoliere had to shift all his weight as ballast, and the Colonel and the girl had shifted too, under the blanket, with the wind getting under the edge of the blanket; wildly.

They had not spoken for a long time and the Colonel had noted that the gondola had only inches free in passing under the last bridge.

"How are you, Daughter?"

"I'm quite lovely."

"Do you love me?"

"Please don't ask such silly things."

"The tide is very high and we only just made that last bridge."

"I think I know where we are going. I was born here."

"I've made mistakes in my home town," the Colonel said. "Being born there isn't everything."

"It is very much," the girl said. "You know that. Please hold me very tightly so we can be a part of each other for a little while.

"We can try," the Colonel said.

"Couldn't I be you?"

"That's awfully complicated. We could try of course."

"I'm you now," she said. "And I just took the city of Paris."

"Jesus, Daughter," he said. "You've got an awful lot of problems on your hands. The next thing, they will parade the twenty-eighth division through."

"I don't care."

"I do."

"Were they not good?"

"Sure. They had fine commanders, too. But they were National Guard and hard luck. What you call a T.S. division. Get your T.S. slip from the Chaplain."

"I understand none of those things."

"They aren't worth explaining," the Colonel said.

"Will you tell me some true things about Paris? I love it so much and when I think of you taking it, then, it is as though I were riding

in this gondola with Maréchal Ney."

"A no good job," the Colonel said. "Anyway, not after he fought all those rear guard actions coming back from that big Russian town. He used to fight ten, twelve, fifteen times a day. Maybe more. Afterwards, he couldn't recognize people. Please don't get in any gondolas with him."

"He was always one of my great heroes."

"Yeah. Mine too. Until Quatre Bras. Maybe it wasn't Quatre Bras. I'm getting rusty. Give it the generic title of Waterloo."

"Was he bad there?"

"Awful," the Colonel told her. "Forget it. Too many rear guard actions coming back from Moskova."

"But they called him the bravest of the brave."

"You can't eat on that. You have to be that, always, and then be the smartest of the smart. Then you need a lot of stuff coming up."

"Tell me about Paris, please. We should not make more love, I know."

"I don't know it. Who says it?"

"I say it because I love you."

"All right. You said it and you love me. So we act on that. The hell with it."

"Do you think we could once more if it would not hurt you?"

"Hurt me?" the Colonel said. "When the hell was I ever hurt?"

Chapter XIV

“Please don’t be bad,” she said, pulling the blanket over them both. “Please drink a glass of this with me. You know you’ve been hurt.”

“Exactly,” the Colonel said. “Let’s forget it.”

“All right,” she said. “I learned that word, or those two words from you. We have forgotten it.”

“Why do you like the hand?” the Colonel asked, placing it where he should.

“Please don’t pretend to be stupid, and please let’s not think of anything, or anything, or anything.”

“I am stupid,” the Colonel said. “But I won’t think of anything or anything nor of nothing nor of his brother, tomorrow.”

“Please be good and kind.”

“I will be. And I will tell you, now, a military secret. Top Secret equals British Most Secret. I love you.”

“That’s nice,” she said. “And you put it nicely.”

“I’m nice,” the Colonel said, and checked on the bridge that was coming up, and saw there was clearance. “That’s the first thing people notice about me.”

“I always use the wrong words,” the girl said. “Please just love me. I wish it was me who could love you.”

“You do.”

“Yes, I do,” she said. “With all my heart.”

They were going with the wind now and they were both tired.

“Do you think—”

“I don’t think,” the girl said.

“Well try and think.”

“I will.”

“Drink a glass of this.”

“Why not? It’s very good.”

It was. There was still ice in the bucket, and the wine was cold and clear.

“Can I stay at the Gritti?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“It wouldn’t be right. For them. Nor you. The hell with me.”

“Then I suppose I should go home.”

“Yes,” the Colonel said. “That is the logical supposition.”

“That is an awful way to say a sad thing. Can’t we even pretend some things?”

“No. I’ll take you home and you sleep good and well and tomorrow we will meet where and when you say.”

“May I call the Gritti?”

“Of course. I’ll always be awake. Will you call when you are awake?”

“Yes. But why do you always wake so early?”

“It is a business habit.”

“Oh, I wish you were not in that business, and that you were not going to die.”

“So do I,” said the Colonel. “But I’m getting out of the business.”

“Yes,” she said, sleepily and comfortably. “Then we go to Rome and get the clothes.”

“And live happily ever after.”

“Please don’t,” she said. “Please, please, don’t. You know I made the resolution not to cry.”

“You’re crying now,” the Colonel said. “What the hell have you got to lose on that resolution?”

“Take me home please.”

“That’s what I was doing in the first place,” the Colonel told her.

“Be kind once first.”

“I will,” the Colonel said.

After they, or the Colonel, rather, had paid the *gondoliere* who was unknowing, yet knowing all, solid, sound, respectful and trustworthy, they walked into the Piazzetta and then across the great, cold, wind-swept square that was hard and old under their feet. They walked holding close and hard in their sorrow and their happiness.

“This is the place where the German shot the pigeons,” the girl said.

“We probably killed him,” the Colonel said. “Or his brother. Maybe we hanged him. I wouldn’t know. I’m not in C.I.D.”

“Do you love me still on these water-worn, cold and old stones?”

“Yes. I’d like to spread a bed roll here and prove it.”

“That would be more barbarous than the pigeon shooter.”

“I’m barbarous,” the Colonel said.

“Not always.”

“Thank you for the not always.”

“We turn here.”

“I think I know that. When are they going to tear that damned Cinema Palace down and put up a real cathedral? That’s what T5 Jackson wants.”

“When someone brings Saint Mark back another time under a load of pork from Alexandria.”

“That was a Torcello boy.”

“You’re a Torcello boy.”

“Yes. I’m a Basso Piave boy and a Grappa boy straight here from Pertica. I’m a Pasubio boy, too, if you know what that means. It was worse just to live there than to fight anywhere else. In the platoon they used to share anyone’s gonococci brought from Schio and carried in a matchbox. They used to share this just so they could leave because it was intolerable.”

“But you stayed.”

“Sure,” the Colonel said. “I’m always the last man to leave the

party, fiesta I mean, not as in political party. The truly unpopular guest."

"Should we go?"

"I thought you had made up your mind."

"I had. But when you said it about unpopular guest it was unmade."

"Keep it made up."

"I can hold a decision."

"I know. You can hold any damn thing. But, Daughter, sometimes you don't just hold. That is for stupids. Sometimes you have to switch fast."

"I'll switch if you like."

"No. I think the decision was sound."

"But won't it be an awfully long time until morning?"

"That all depends on whether one has luck or not."

"I should sleep well."

"Yes," the Colonel said. "At your age if you can't sleep they ought to take you out and hang you."

"Oh please."

"Sorry," he said. "I meant shoot you!"

"We are nearly home and you could be kind now if you wanted."

"I'm so kind I stink. Let somebody else be kind."

They were in front of the palace now and there it was; the palace. There was nothing to do now but pull the bell cord, or enter with the key. I've been lost in this place, the Colonel thought, and I was never lost in my life.

"Please kiss me good night, kindly."

The Colonel did and loved her so he could not bear it.

She opened the door with the key, which was in her bag. Then she was gone and the Colonel was alone, with the worn pavement, the wind, which still held in the north, and the shadows from where a light went on. He walked home.

Only tourists and lovers take gondolas, he thought. Except to cross the canal in the places where there are no bridges. I ought to go to Harry's, probably, or some damn place. But I think I'll go home.

Chapter XV

It was really home, if a hotel room can be so described. His pajamas were laid on the bed. There was a bottle of Valpolicella by the reading light, and by the bed a bottle of mineral water, in an ice bucket with a glass beside it on the silver tray. The portrait had been de-framed and was placed on two chairs where he could see it from the bed.

The Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune* lay on the bed beside his three pillows. He used three pillows, as Arnaldo knew, and his extra bottle of medicine, not the one that he carried in his pocket, was beside the reading light. The inner doors of the armoire, the mirrored ones, were opened in such a way, that he could see the portrait from the side. His scuffed slippers were by the bed.

I'll buy it, the Colonel said, to himself, since there was no one else there except the portrait.

He opened the Valpolicella which had been uncorked, and then recorked, carefully, precisely, and lovingly, and poured himself a glass into the glass which was much better than any hotel should use which was faced with breakage.

"Here's to you, Daughter," he said. "You beauty and lovely. Do you know, that, among other things, you smell good always? You smell wonderfully even in a high wind or under a blanket or kissing goodnight. You know almost no one does, and you don't use scent."

She looked at him from the portrait and said nothing.

"The hell with it," he said. "I'm not going to talk to a picture."

What do you think went wrong tonight? he thought.

Me, I guess. Well I will try to be a good boy tomorrow all day; starting at first light.

"Daughter," he said, and he was talking to her, and not to a picture now. "Please know I love you and that I wish to be delicate and good. And please stay with me always now."

The picture was the same.

The Colonel took out the emeralds from his pocket, and looked at them, feeling them slide, cold and yet warm, as they take warmth, and as all good stones have warmth, from his bad hand into his good hand.

I should have put these in an envelope and locked them up, he thought. But what the effing security is there better than I can give them? I have to get these back to you fast, Daughter.

It was fun, though. And they're not worth more than a quarter of a million. What I would make in four hundred years. Have to check that figure.

He put the stones in the pocket of his pajamas and put a handkerchief over them. Then he buttoned the pocket. The first sound thing you learn, he thought, is to have flaps and buttons on all your pockets. I imagine that I learned it too early.

The stones felt good. They were hard and warm against his flat, hard, old, and warm chest, and he noted how the wind was blowing, looked at the portrait, poured another glass of Valpolicella and then started to read the Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune.*

I ought to take the pills, he thought. But the hell with the pills.

Then he took them just the same, and went on reading the New York Herald. He was reading Red Smith, and he liked him very much.

Chapter XVI

The Colonel woke before daylight and checked that there was no one sleeping with him.

The wind was still blowing hard and he went to the open windows to check the weather. There was no light as yet in the east across the Grand Canal, but his eyes could see how rough the water was. Be a hell of a tide today, he thought. Probably flood the square. That's always fun. Except for the pigeons.

He went to the bathroom, taking the Herald Tribune and Red Smith with him, as well as a glass of Valpolicella. Damn I'll be glad when the *Gran Maestro* gets those big *fiascos,* he thought. This wine gets awfully dreggy at the end.

He sat there, with his newspaper, thinking of the things of that day.

There would be the telephone call. But it might be very late because she would be sleeping late. The young sleep late, he thought, and the beautiful sleep half again as late. She certainly would not call early, and the shops did not open until nine or a little later.

Hell, he thought, I have these damned stones. How could anyone do a thing like that?

You know how, he said to himself, reading the ads in the back of the paper. You've put it on the line enough times. It isn't crazy or morbid. She just wanted to put it on the line. It was a good thing it was me, he thought.

That is the only good thing about being me, he considered. Well I'm me, goddamn it. For better or for much worse. How would you

like to sit on the can as you have sat almost every morning of your damned life with this in your pocket?

He was addressing no one, except, perhaps, posterity.

How many mornings have you sat in the row with all the others? That's the worst of it. That and shaving. Or you go off to be alone, and think or not think, and pick a good piece of cover and there are two riflemen there already, or some boy asleep.

There's no more privacy in the army than in a professional shithouse. I've never been in a professional shithouse but I imagine they run it much the same. I could learn to run one, he thought.

Then I'd make all my leading shithouse characters Ambassadors and the unsuccessful ones could be Corps-Commanders or command military districts in peace time. Don't be bitter, boy, he said to himself. It's too early in the morning and your duty's not completed yet.

What would you do with their wives, he asked himself? Buy them new hats or shoot them, he said. It's all part of the same process.

He looked at himself in the mirror, set in the half closed door. It showed him at a slight angle. It's a deflection shot, he said to himself, and they didn't lead me enough. Boy, he said, you certainly are a beat-up, old looking bastard.

Now you have to shave and look at that face while you do it. Then you must get a haircut. That's easy in this town. You're a Colonel of Infantry, boy. You can't go around looking like Joan of Arc or General (Brevetted) George Armstrong Custer. That beautiful horse-cavalryman. I guess it is fun to be that way and have a loving wife and use sawdust for brains. But it must have seemed like the wrong. career to him when they finished up on that hill above the Little Big Horn, with the ponies making the circle around them in all the dust, and the sage brush crushed by the hooves of the horses of the other people, and nothing left to him for the rest of his life but that old lovely black powder smell and his own people shooting

each other, and themselves, because they were afraid of what the squaws would do to them.

The body was unspeakably mutilated, they used to put in this same paper. And on that hill to know you'd made one real mistake, finally, and for good, and complete with true handles. Poor horse-cavalryman, he thought. The end of all his dreams. That's one good thing about being an Infantryman. You never have any dreams except bad dreams.

Well, he said to himself, we're finished here, and pretty soon there will be good light and I can see the portrait. I'll be damned if I'll turn that in. I keep that.

Oh Christ, he said, I wonder what she looks like now sleeping. I know how she looks, he said to himself. Wonderful. She sleeps as though she had not gone to sleep. As though she were just resting. I hope she is, he thought. I hope she's resting well. Christ Jesus how I love her and I hope I never do her harm.

Chapter XVII

When it started to be light, the Colonel saw the portrait. He, very probably, saw it as quickly as any man who was civilized and had to read and sign the forms he did not believe in, could see an object, as soon as it was visible. Yes, he said to himself, I have eyes and they have fairly fast perception still, and once they had ambition. I have led my Ruffians where they were well peppered. There are but three of the two hundred and fifty of them left alive and they are for the town's end to beg during life.

That's from Shakespeare, he told the portrait. The winner and still the undisputed champion.

Someone might take him, in a short bout. But I would rather revere him. Did you ever read King Lear, Daughter? Mister Gene Tunney did, and he was the champion of the world. But I read it too. Soldiers care for Mister Shakespeare too, though it may seem impossible. He writes like a soldier himself.

You have anything to say in your defense except to put your head back? he asked the portrait. You want some more, Shakespeare?

You don't have to defend. You just rest and leave it as it is. It's no good. Your defense and my defense is no damn good. But who could tell you to go out and hang yourself the way we do?

Nobody, he said to himself, and to the portrait. And certainly not me.

He put his good hand down and found that the room waiter had left a second bottle of Valpolicella alongside of where the first had been.

If you love a country, the Colonel thought, you might as well admit it. Sure, admit it boy.

I have loved three and lost them thrice. Give a credit. We've retook two. Retaken, he corrected.

And we will retake the other one, General Fat Ass Franco on his shooting stick with the advice of his doctor and tame ducks and a screen of Moorish cavalry when he shoots.

Yes, he said softly to the girl who looked at him clearly now in the first and best light.

We will retake and they will all be hung upside down outside of filling stations. You have been warned, he added.

"Portrait," he said, "why the hell can't you just get into bed with me instead of being eighteen solid stone blocks away. Maybe more. I'm not as sharp now as I was; whenever."

"Portrait," he said to the girl, and to the portrait, and to the girl both; but there wasn't any girl, and the portrait was as it was painted.

"Portrait, keep your goddamn chin up so you can break my heart easier."

It certainly was a lovely present, the Colonel thought.

"Can you maneuver?" he asked the portrait. "Good and fast?"

Portrait said nothing and the Colonel answered, You know damn well she can. She'd outmaneuver you the best day you were ever born and she would stay and fight where you would eff-off, discreetly.

"Portrait," he said. "Boy or daughter or my one true love or whatever it is; you know what it is, portrait."

The portrait, as before, did not answer. But the Colonel, who was a General now again, early in the morning at the only time he really knew, and with Valpolicella, knew as absolutely as though he had just read his third Wassermann that there was no eff-off in portrait, and he felt shame for having talked to portrait roughly.

"I'll be the best goddamned boy you ever witnessed today. And

you can tell your principal that."

Portrait, as was her fashion, was silent.

She probably would speak to a horse-cavalryman, the General, for now he had two stars, and they grated on his shoulders, and showed white in the vague, scuffed red on the plaque in front of his jeep. He never used command cars, nor semi-armoured vehicles complete with sand bags.

"The hell with you, portrait," he said. "Or get your T.S. slip from the universal chaplain of us all, with combined religions. You ought to be able to eat on that."

"The hell with you," the portrait said, without speaking. "You low class soldier."

"Yes," the Colonel said, for now he was a Colonel again, and had relinquished all his former rank.

"I love you, portrait, very much. But don't get rough with me. I love you very much because you are beautiful. But I love the girl better, a million times better, hear it?"

There was no sign that she heard it, so he tired of it.

"You are in a fixed position, portrait," he said. "Without or with any frame. And I am going to maneuver."

The portrait was as silent as she had been since the concierge had brought her into the room, and aided and abetted by the second waiter, had shown her to the Colonel and to the girl.

The Colonel looked at her and saw she was indefensible, now that the light was good, or almost good.

He saw, too, that she was the portrait of his own true love, and so he said, "I am sorry for all the stupidnesses I say. I do not wish ever to be brutal. Maybe we could both sleep a little while, with luck, and then, perhaps, your Mistress would call on the telephone?"

Maybe she will even call, he thought.

Chapter XVIII

The hall porter pushed the *Gazzettino* under the door, and the Colonel had it, noiselessly, almost as soon as it had passed through the slit.

He very nearly took it from the hall porter's hand. He did not like the hall porter since he had found him, one day, going through his bag, when he, the Colonel, had re-entered the room after having left it, presumably for some time. He had to come back to the room to get his bottle of the medicine, which he had forgotten, and the hall porter was well through his bag.

"I guess you don't say stick them up in this hotel," the Colonel had said. "But you're no credit to your town."

There was silence produced, and re-produced, by the striped waist-coated man with the Fascist face, and the Colonel said, "Go on, boy, look through the rest of it. I don't carry any military secrets with my toilet articles."

Since then, there was scant friendship between them, and the Colonel enjoyed trying to take the morning paper from the striped waist-coated man's hand; noiselessly, and when he heard, or saw it first make a move under the door.

"OK, you won today, jerk," he said in the best Venetian dialect he could summon at that hour. "Go hang yourself."

But they don't hang themselves, he thought. They just have to go on putting papers under other people's doors that do not even hate them. It must be quite a difficult trade being an ex-Fascist. Maybe he is not an ex-Fascist too. How do you know.

I can't hate Fascists, he thought. Nor Krauts either, since

unfortunately, I am a soldier.

"Listen, Portrait," he said. "Do I have to hate the Krauts because we kill them? Do I have to hate them as soldiers and as human beings? It seems too easy a solution to me."

Well, portrait. Forget it. Forget it. You're not old enough to know about it. You are two years younger than the girl that you portray, and she is younger and older than hell; which is quite an old place.

"Listen, portrait," he said, and saying it, knew that now as long as he lived, he would have someone to talk to at the early hours that he woke.

"As I was saying, portrait. The hell with that too. That's too old for you too. That is one of the things you can't say no matter how true it is. There are lots of things I can never say to you and maybe that will be good for me. It is about time something was. What do you think would be good for me, Portrait?

"What's the matter, Portrait?" he asked her. "You getting hungry? I am."

So he rang the bell for the waiter who would bring breakfast.

He knew that now, even though the light was so good that every wave showed on the Grand Canal, lead colored and solid heavy with the wind, and the tide now high over the landing steps of the Palace directly opposite his room, there would be no telephone call for several hours.

The young sleep good, he thought. They deserve it.

"Why do we have to get old?" he asked the waiter who had come in with his glass-eye and the menu.

"I don't know, my Colonel. I suppose it is a natural process."

"Yes. I guess I imagine that too. The eggs fried with their faces up. Tea and toast."

"You don't want anything American?"

"The hell with anything American except me. Is the *Gran Maestro* astir yet?"

“He has your Valpolicella in the big wicker fiascos of two liters and I have brought this decanter with it.”

“That one,” the Colonel said. “I wish to Christ I could give him a regiment.”

“I don’t think he would want one, really.”

“No,” the Colonel said. “I don’t want one, really, myself.”

Chapter XIX

The Colonel breakfasted with the leisure of a fighter who has been clipped badly, hears four, and knows how to relax truly for five seconds more.

"Portrait," he said. "You ought to relax too. That's the only thing that is going to be difficult about you. That's what they call the static element in painting. You know, Portrait, that almost no pictures, paintings rather, move at all. A few do. But not many.

"I wish that your mistress was here and we could have movement. How do girls like you and she know so much so damn young and be so beautiful?

"With us, if a girl is really beautiful, she comes from Texas and maybe, with luck, she can tell you what month it is. They can all count good though.

"They teach them how to count, and keep their legs together, and how to put their hair up in pin curls. Sometime, portrait, for your sins, if you have any, you ought to have to sleep in a bed with a girl who has put her hair up in pin curls to be beautiful tomorrow. Not tonight. They'd never be beautiful tonight. For tomorrow, when we make the competition.

"The girl, Renata, that you are, is sleeping now without ever having done anything to her hair. She is sleeping with it spread out on the pillow and all it is to her is a glorious, dark, silky annoyance, that she can hardly remember to comb, except that her governess taught her.

"I see her in the street with the lovely long-legged stride and the wind doing anything it wants to her hair, and her true breasts under

the sweater, and then I see the nights in Texas with the pin curls; tight and subjected by metallic instruments.

"Pin me no pin curls, my beloved," he said to the Portrait, "and I will try to lay it on the line in round, heavy, hard silver dollars or with the other."

I mustn't get rough, he thought.

Then he said to the portrait, for he did not capitalize her now in his mind, "You are so goddamned beautiful you stink. Also you are jailbait. Renata's two years older now. You are under seventeen."

And why can't I have her and love her and cherish her and never be rude, nor bad, and have the five sons that go to the five corners of the world; wherever that is? I don't know. I guess the cards we draw are those we get. You wouldn't like to re-deal would you dealer?

No. They only deal to you once, and then you pick them up and play them. I can play them, if I draw any damn thing at all, he told portrait; who was unimpressed.

"Portrait," he said. "You better look the other way so that you will not be unmaidenly. I am going to take a shower now and shave, something you will never have to do, and put on my soldier suit and go and walk around this town even though it is too early."

So, he got out of bed, favoring his bad leg, which hurt him always. He pulled the reading light with his bad hand. There was sufficient light, and he had been wasting electricity for nearly an hour.

He regretted this as he regretted all his errors. He walked past portrait, only looking casually, and looked at himself in the mirror. He had dropped both parts of his pajamas and he looked at himself critically and truly.

"You beat-up old bastard," he said to the mirror. Portrait was a thing of the past. Mirror was actuality and of this day.

The gut is fiat, he said without uttering it. The chest is all right except where it contains the defective muscle. We are hung as we

are hung, for better or worse, or some-thing, or something awful.

You are one half a hundred years old, you bastard you. Now go in and take a shower, and scrub good, and afterwards put on your soldier suit. Today is another day.

Chapter XX

The Colonel stopped at the reception desk in the lobby, but the concierge was not there yet. There was only the night porter.

"Can you put something in the safe for me?"

"No, my Colonel. No one may open the safe until the assistant manager or the concierge arrives. But I will guard anything for you that you wish."

"Thank you. It's not worth the trouble," and he buttoned the Gritti envelope, with the stones inside, the envelope addressed to himself, into the inside left pocket of his tunic.

"There's no real crime here now," the night porter said.

It had been a long night and he was happy to speak to someone. "There never really was, my Colonel. There are only differences of opinion and politics."

"What do you have for politics?" the Colonel asked; for he was lonely too.

"About what you would expect."

"I see. And how is your thing going?"

"I think it goes quite well. Maybe not as well as last year. But still quite well. We were beaten and we have to wait a while now."

"Do you work at it?"

"Not much. It is more the politics of my heart than of my head. I believe in it with my head too, but I have very little political development."

"When you get it you won't have any heart."

"Maybe not. Do you have politics in the army?"

"Plenty," the Colonel said. "But not what you mean."

“Well, we better not discuss it then. I have not meant to be intrusive.”

“I asked the question; the original question rather. It was only to talk. It was not an interrogation.”

“I don’t think it was. You do not have the face of an inquisitor, my Colonel, and I know about the Order, although I am not a member.”

“You may be member material. I’ll take it up with the *Gran Maestro.*”

“We come from the same town; but from distinct quarters.”

“It’s a good town.”

“My Colonel, I have so little political development that I believe all honorable men are honorable.”

“Oh you’ll get over that,” the Colonel assured him. “Don’t worry, boy. You’ve got a young party. Naturally you make errors.”

“Please don’t talk like that.”

“It was just rough early morning joking.”

“Tell me, my Colonel, what do you really think about Tito?”

“I think several things. But he’s my next door neighbor. I’ve found it better not to talk about my neighbor.”

“I’d like to learn.”

“Then learn it the hard way. Don’t you know people don’t give answers to such questions?”

“I had hoped they did.”

“They don’t,” the Colonel said. “Not in my position. All I can tell you is that Mister Tito has plenty problems.”

“Well, I know that now truly,” the night porter who was really only a boy said.

“I hope you do,” the Colonel said. “I wouldn’t call it, as knowledge, any pearl of great price. Now, good day, for I must take a walk for the good of my liver, or something.”

“Good day, my Colonel. *Fa brutto tempo.*”

“*Bruttissimo,*” the Colonel said and, pulling the belt of his

raincoat tight, and settling his shoulders into it, and the skirts well down, he stepped out into the wind.

Chapter XXI

The Colonel took the ten *centesimi* gondola across the Canal, paying the usual dirty note, and standing with the crowd of those condemned to early rising.

He looked back at the Gritti and saw the windows of his room; still open. There was no promise nor threat of rain; only the same strong wild, cold wind from the mountains. Everyone in the gondola looked cold and the Colonel thought, I wish I could issue these wind-proof coats to everyone on board. God, and every officer that ever wore one, knows they are not waterproof, and who made the money out of that one?

You can't get water through a Burberry. But I suppose some able jerk has his boy in Groton now, or maybe Canterbury, where the big contractors' boys go, because our coats leaked.

And what about some brother officer of mine who split with him? I wonder who the Benny Meyers of the ground forces were? There probably wasn't only one. Probably, he thought, there must be very many. You must not be awake yet, to talk that simply. They do keep the wind out though. The raincoats. Raincoats my ass.

The gondola pulled up between the stakes on the far bank of the canal and the Colonel watched the black-clad people climb up out of the black-painted vehicle. Is she a vehicle? he thought. Or must a vehicle have wheels or be tracked?

Nobody would give you a penny for your thoughts, he thought. Not this morning. But I've seen them worth a certain amount of money when the chips were down.

He penetrated into the far side of the city, the side that finally

fronted on the Adriatic, and that he liked the best. He was going in by a very narrow street, and he was going to not keep track of the number of more or less north and south streets that he crossed, nor count the bridges, and then try and orient himself so he would come out at the market without getting up any dead ends.

It was a game you play, as some people used to play double Canfield or any solitary card games. But it had the advantage of you moving while you do it and that you look at the houses, the minor vistas, the shops and the *trattorias* and at old palaces of the city of Venice while you are walking. If you loved the city of Venice it was an excellent game.

It is a sort of *solitaire ambulante* and what you win is the happiness of your eye and heart. If you made the market, on this side of town, without ever being stymied, you won the game. But you must not make it too easy and you must not count.

On the other side of the town, game was to leave from the Grim and make the Rialto by the *Fondamente Nuove* without a mistake.

Then you could climb the bridge and cross it and go down into the market. He liked the market best. It was the part of any town he always went to first.

Just then he heard the two young men behind him saying the things about him. He knew they were young men by their voices and he did not look back, but listened carefully for distance and waited for the next turn to see them, as he turned.

They are on their way to work, he decided. Maybe they are former Fascists or maybe they are something else, or maybe it is just the line that they are talking. But they are making it pretty personal now. It isn't just Americans, it is also me, myself, my gray hair, the slightly crooked way I walk, the combat boots (those, of that stripe, disliked the practicability of combat boots. They liked boots that rang on the flag stones and took a high black polish.).

It is my uniform which they find to be without grace. Now it is why I am walking at this hour, and now it is their absolute security

that I can no longer make love.

The Colonel swung sharp to the left at the next comer, seeing what he had to deal with and the exact distance, and when the two young men came around the comer which was formed by the apse of the church of Frari there was no Colonel. He was in the dead angle behind the apse of the ancient church and as they passed, he, hearing them come by their talk, stepped out with a hand in each low pocket of his raincoat and turned himself, and the raincoat, with the two hands in the pockets, toward them.

They stopped and he looked at them both in the face and smiled his old and worn death smile. Then he looked down at their feet, as you always look at the feet of such people, since they wear their shoes too tight, and when you take the shoes off them you see their hammertoes. The Colonel spat on the pavement and said nothing.

The two of them, they *were* the first thing he had suspected, looked at him with hatred and with that other thing. Then they were off like marsh birds, walking with the long strides of herons too, the Colonel thought, and something of the flight of curlews, and looking back with hatred, waiting to have the last word if the distance was ever safe.

It is a pity they weren't ten against one, the Colonel thought. They might have fought. I should not blame them, since they were defeated.

But their manners were not good in respect to a man of my rank and age. Also it was not intelligent to think all fifty year old Colonels would not understand their language. Nor was it intelligent to think old Infantrymen would not fight this early in the morning against the simple odds of two to one.

I'd hate to fight in this town where I love the people. I would avoid it. But couldn't those badly educated youths realize what sort of animal they were dealing with? Don't they know how you get to walk that way? Nor any of the other signs that combat people show as surely as a fisherman's hands tell you if he is a fisherman from

the creases from the cord cuts.

It is true they only saw my back and ass and legs and boots. But you'd think they might have told from the way they must move. Maybe they don't anymore. But when I had a chance to look at them and think, Take the two of them out and hang them, I believe they understood. They understood quite clearly.

What's a man life worth anyway? Ten thousand dollars if his insurance is paid up in our army. What the hell has that got to do with it. Oh yes, that was what I was thinking about before those jerks showed; how much money I had saved my government, in my time when people like Benny Meyers were in the trough.

Yes, he said, and how much you lost them at the Chateau that time at ten G's a head. Well nobody ever really understood it except me, I guess. There's no reason to tell them now. Your commanding general sometimes puts things down as the Fortunes of War. Back at Army they know such things are bound to happen. You do it, as ordered, with a big butcher-bill and you're a hero.

Christ, I am opposed to the excessive butcher bill, he thought. But you get the orders, and you have to carry them out. It is the mistakes that are no good to sleep with. But why the hell sleep with them anyway. It never did any good. But they can certainly crawl into a sack sometimes. They can crawl in and stay in there with you.

Cheer up, boy, he said. Remember you had a lot of money on you when you picked that one. And you might have been stripped if you lost. You can't fight a lick anymore with your hands, and you didn't have any weapon.

So don't be gloomy, boy, or man, or Colonel, or busted General. We're almost to the market now and you made it without hardly noticing.

Hardly noticing is bad, he added.

Chapter XXII

He loved the market. A great part of it was close-packed and crowded into several side streets, and it was so concentrated that it was difficult not to jostle people, unintentionally, and each time you stopped to look, to buy, or to admire, you formed an *îlot de résistance* against the flow of the morning attack of the purchasers.

The Colonel liked to study the spread and high piled cheeses and the great sausages. People at home think *mortadella* is a sausage, he thought.

Then he said to the woman in the booth, “Let me try a little of that sausage, please. Only a sliver.”

She cut a thin, paper thin, slice for him, ferociously, and lovingly, and when the Colonel tasted it, there was the half smokey, black pepper-corned, true flavor of the meat from the hogs that ate acorns in the mountains.

“I will take a quarter of a kilo.”

The Barone’s lunches for the shooting blinds were of a Spartan quality, which the Colonel respected, since he knew no one should eat much while shooting. He felt, though, that he might augment the lunch with this sausage, and share it with the poler and picker-upper. He might give a slice to Bobby, the retriever, who would be wet through to his hide many times, and enthusiastic still, but shaking with cold.

“Is this the best sausage that you have?” he asked the woman. “Have you nothing that does not show and is reserved for better and steadier customers?”

“This is the best sausage. There are many other sausages, as you

know. But this is the best."

"Then give me one eighth of a kilo of a sausage that is highly fortifying, but is not highly seasoned."

"I have it," she said. "It is a little new but exactly as you describe."

This sausage was for Bobby.

But you do not say that you buy sausages for a dog in Italy where the worst crime is to be considered a fool and many people go hungry. You may give expensive sausage to a dog before a man who works for his living and knows what a dog goes through in water in cold weather. But you do not buy them, stating your purpose in possessing them, unless you are a fool, or a millionaire from the war and from after.

The Colonel paid for the wrapped-up package and proceeded on through the market inhaling the smell of roasted coffee and looking at the amount of fat on each carcass in the butcher section, as though he were enjoying the Dutch painters, whose names no one remembers, who painted, in perfection of detail, all things you shot, or that were eatable.

A market is the closest thing to a good museum like the Prado or as the Accademia is now, the Colonel thought.

He took a short cut, and was at the fish market.

In the market, spread on the slippery stone floor, or in their baskets, or their rope-handled boxes, were the heavy, gray-green lobsters with their magenta overtones that presaged their death in boiling water. They have all been captured by treachery, the Colonel thought, and their claws are pegged.

There were the small soles, and there were a few albacore and bonito. These last, the Colonel thought, looked like boat-tailed bullets, dignified in death, and with the huge eye of the pelagic fish.

They were not made to be caught except for their voraciousness. The poor sole exists, in shallow water, to feed man. But these other roving bullets, in their great bands, live in blue water and travel

through all oceans and all seas.

A nickel for your thoughts now, he thought. Let's see what else they have.

There were many eels, alive and no longer confident in their eeldom. There were fine prawns that could make a *scampi brochetto* spitted and broiled on a rapier-like instrument that could be used as a Brooklyn icepick. There were medium sized shrimp, gray and opalescent, awaiting their turn, too, for the boiling water and their immortality, to have their shucked carcasses float out easily on an ebb tide on the Grand Canal.

The speedy shrimp, the Colonel thought, with tentacles longer than the mustaches of that old Japanese admiral, comes here now to die for our benefit. Oh Christian shrimp. he thought, master of retreat, and with your wonderful intelligence service in those two light whips, why did they not teach you about nets and that lights are dangerous?

Must have been some slip-up, he thought.

Now he looked at the many small crustaceans, the razor-edge clams you only should eat raw if you had your typhoid shots up to date, and all the small delectables.

He went past these, stopping to ask one seller where his clams came from. They came from a good place, without sewerage and the Colonel asked to have six opened. He drank the juice and cut the clam out, cutting close against the shell with the curved knife the man handed him. The man had handed him the knife because he knew from experience the Colonel cut closer to the shell than he had been taught to cut.

The Colonel paid him the pittance that they cost, which must have been much greater than the pittance those received who caught them, and he thought, now I must see the stream and canal fishes and get back to the hotel.

Chapter XXIII

The Colonel arrived at the lobby of the Hotel Gritti Palace. His gondolieres were paid off and, now, inside the hotel, there was no wind.

It had taken two men to bring the gondola up the Grand Canal from the market. They had both worked hard, and he had paid them what it was worth, and some more.

"Are there any calls for me?" he asked the concierge, who was now in attendance.

The concierge was light, fast, sharp-faced, intelligent and polite, always, without subservience. He wore the crossed keys of his office on the lapels of his blue uniform without ostentation. He was the concierge. It is a rank very close to that of Captain, the Colonel thought. An officer and not a Gentleman. Make it top sergeant in the old days; except he's dealing always with the brass.

"My lady has called twice," the concierge said in English. Or whatever that language should be called we all speak, the Colonel thought. Leave it at English. That is about what they have left. They should be allowed to keep the name of the language. Cripps will probably ration it shortly anyway.

"Please put me through to her at once," he told the concierge.

The concierge commenced to dial numbers.

"You may talk over there, my Colonel," he said. "I have made the connection."

"You're fast."

"Over there," the concierge said.

Inside the booth the Colonel lifted the receiver and said,

automatically, “Colonel Cantwell speaking.”

“I called twice, Richard,” the girl said. “But they explained that you were out. Where were you?”

“At the market. How are you, my lovely?”

“No one listens on this phone at this hour. I am your lovely. Whoever that is,”

“You. Did you sleep well?”

“It was like skiing in the dark. Not really skiing but really dark.”

“That’s the way it should be. Why did you wake so early? You’ve frightened my concierge.”

“If it is not unmaidenly, how soon can we meet, and where?”

“Where you wish and when you wish.”

“Do you still have the stones and did Miss Portrait help any?”

“Yes to both questions. The stones are in my upper left hand pocket buttoned down. Miss Portrait and I talked late and early and it made everything much easier.”

“Do you love her more than me?”

“I’m not abnormal yet. Perhaps that’s bragging. But she’s lovely.”

“Where should we meet?”

“Should we have breakfast at the Florian, on the right hand side of the square? The square should be flooded and it will be fun to watch.”

“I’ll be there in twenty minutes if you want me.”

“I want you,” the Colonel said and hung up.

Coming out of the telephone booth he, suddenly, did not feel good and then he felt as though the devil had him in an iron cage, built like an iron lung or an iron maiden, and he walked, gray-faced, to the concierge’s desk and said, in Italian, “Domenico, leo, could you get me a glass of water, please?”

The concierge was gone and he leaned on the desk resting. He rested lightly and without illusion. Then the concierge was back with the glass of water, and he took four tablets of the type that you

take two, and he continued resting as lightly as a hawk rests.

"Domenico," he said.

"Yes."

"I have something here in an envelope that you can put in the safe. It may be called for either by myself, in person, or in writing, or by the person you have just put that call through to. Would you like that in writing?"

"No. It would be unnecessary."

"But what about you, boy? You're not immortal, are you?"

"Fairly so," the concierge told him. "But I will put it in writing, and after me, comes the Manager and the Assistant Manager."

"Both good men," the Colonel agreed.

"Wouldn't you like to sit down, my Colonel?"

"No. Who sits down except men and women in change of life hotels? Do you sit down?"

"No."

"I can rest on my feet, or against a God damned tree. My countrymen sit down, or lie down, or fall down. Give them a few energy crackers to stall their whimpers."

He was talking too much to regain confidence quickly.

"Do they really have energy crackers?"

"Sure. It has something in it that keeps you from getting erections. It's like the atomic bomb, only played backwards."

"I can't believe it."

"We have the most terrific military secrets that one General's wife ever told another. Energy crackers is the least of it. Next time we will give all Venice botulism from 56,000 feet. There's nothing to it," the Colonel explained. "They give you anthrax, and you give them botulism."

"But it will be horrible."

"It will be worse than that," the Colonel assured him. "This isn't classified. It's all been published. And while it goes on you can hear Margaret, if you tune in right, singing the "Star Spangled Banner"

on the radio. I think that could be arranged. The voice I would not describe as a big one. Not as we know voices who have heard the good ones in our time. But everything is a trick now. The radio can almost make the voice. And the "Star Spangled Banner" is foolproof until toward the last."

"Do you think they will drop anything here?"

"No. They never have."

The Colonel, who was four star general now, in his wrath and in his agony and in his need for confidence, but secured temporarily through the absorption of the tablets, said, "*Ciao,* Domenico," and left the Gritti.

He figured it took twelve and one half minutes to reach the place where his true love would probably arrive a little late. He walked it carefully and at the speed he should walk it. The bridges were all the same.

Chapter XXIV

His true love was at the table at the exact time that she said she would be. She was as beautiful as always in the hard, morning light that came across the flooded square, and she said. ‘Please, Richard. Are you all right? Please?”

“Sure,” the Colonel said. “You wonder beauty.”

“Did you go to all our places in the market?”

“Only a few of them. I did not go to where they have the wild ducks.”

“Thank you.”

“For nothing,” the Colonel said. “I never go there when we are not together.”

“Don’t you think I should go to the shoot?”

“No. I am quite sure. Alvarito would have asked you if he wanted you.”

“He might not have asked me because he wanted me.”

“That’s true,” the Colonel said, and pondered that for two seconds. “What do you want for breakfast?”

“Breakfast is worthless here, and I don’t like the square when it is flooded. It is sad and the pigeons have no place to alight. It is only really fun toward the last when the children play. Should we go and have breakfast at the Gritti?”

“Do you want to?”

“Yes.”

“Good. We’ll have breakfast there. I’ve had mine already.”

“Really? “

“I’ll have some coffee and hot rolls, and only feel them with my

fingers. Are you awfully hungry?"

"Awfully," she said, truly.

"We'll give breakfast the full treatment," the Colonel said. "You'll wish you had never heard of breakfast."

As they walked, with the wind at their back, and her hair blowing better than any banner, she asked him, holding close, "Do you still love me in the cold, hard Venice light of morning? It is really cold and hard isn't it?"

"I love you and it is cold and hard."

"I loved you all night when I was skiing in the dark."

"How do you do that?"

"It is the same runs except that it is dark and the snow is dark instead of light. You ski the same; controlled and good."

"Did you ski all night? That would be many runs."

"No. Afterwards I slept soundly and well and I woke happy. You were with me and you were asleep like a baby."

"I wasn't with you and I was not asleep."

"You're with me now," she said and held close and tight.

"And we are almost there."

"Yes."

"Have I told you, yet, properly, that I love you?"

"You told me. But tell me again."

"I love you," he said. "Take it frontally and formally please."

"I take it any way you want as long as it is true."

"That's the proper attitude," he said. "You good, brave, lovely girl. Turn your hair sideways once on top of this bridge and let it blow obliquely."

He had made a concession, with obliquely, instead of saying, correctly, oblique.

"That's easy," she said. "Do you like it?"

He looked and saw the profile and the wonder early morning colour and her chest upstanding in the black sweater and her eyes in the wind and he said, "Yes. I like it."

“I’m very glad,” she said.

Chapter XXV

At the Gritti, the *Gran Maestro* seated them at the table which was beside the window that looked out on the Grand Canal. There was no one else in the dining room.

The *Gran Maestro* was festive and well with the morning. He took his ulcers day by day, and his heart the same way. When they did not hurt he did not hurt either.

"Your pitted compatriot eats in bed at his hotel, my colleague tells me," he confided to the Colonel. "We may have a few Belgians. 'The bravest of these were the Belgians,' " he quoted. "There is a pair of *pescecani* from you know where. But they are exhausted and I believe they will eat, as pigs, in their room."

"An excellent situation report," the Colonel said. "Our problem, *Gran Maestro,* is that I have already eaten in my room as pitted does and as the *pescecani* will. But this lady—"

"Young girl," interrupted the *Gran Maestro* with his whole-face smile. He was feeling very good since it was a completely new day.

"This very young lady wants a breakfast to end break-fasts."

"I understand," the *Gran Maestro* said and he looked at Renata and his heart rolled over as a porpoise does in the sea. It is a beautiful movement and only a few people in this world can feel it and accomplish it.

"What do you want to eat, Daughter?" the Colonel asked, looking at her early morning, unretouched dark beauty.

"Everything. "

"Would you give any suggestions?"

"Tea instead of coffee and whatever the *Gran Maestro* can

salvage."

"It won't be salvage, Daughter," said the *Gran Maestro*.

"I'm the one who calls her Daughter."

"I said it honestly," the *Gran Maestro* said. "We can make or *fabricar rognons* grilled with champignons dug by people I know. Or, raised in damp cellars. There can be an omelet with truffles dug by pigs of distinction. There can be real Canadian bacon from maybe Canada, even."

"Wherever that is," the girl said happily and unillusioned.

"Wherever that is," said the Colonel seriously. "And I know damn well where it is."

"I think we should stop the jokes now and get to the breakfast. "

"If it is not unmaidenly I think so too. Mine is a decanted flask of the Valpolicella."

"Nothing else?"

"Bring me one ration of the alleged Canadian bacon," the Colonel said.

He looked at the girl, since they were alone now, and he said, "How are you my dearest?"

"Quite hungry, I suppose. But thank you for being good for so long a time."

"It was easy," the Colonel told her in Italian.

Chapter XXVI

They sat there at the table and watched the early stormy light over the Canal. The grey had turned to a yellow grey, now, with the sun, and the waves were working against the outgoing tide.

"Mummy says she can't live here too long at any time because there are no trees," the girl said. "That's why she goes to the country."

"That's why everyone goes to the country," the Colonel said. "We could plant a few trees if we found a place with a big enough garden."

"I like Lombardy poplars and plane trees the best, but I am still quite uneducated."

"I like them, and cypresses and chestnut trees. The real chestnut and the horse chestnut. But you will never see trees, Daughter, until we go to America. Wait till you see a white pine or a ponderosa pine."

"Will we see them when we make the long trip and stop at all the filling stations or comfort stations or whatever they are called?"

"Lodges and Tourist Camps," the Colonel said. "Those others we stop at; but not for the night."

"I want so much for us to roll up to a comfort station and plank down my money and tell them to fill her up and check the oil, Mac, the way it is in American books or in the films."

"That's a filling station."

"Then what is a comfort station?" "Where you go, you know-"

"Oh," the girl said and blushed. "I'm sorry. I want to learn American so much. But I suppose I shall say barbarous things the

way you do sometimes in Italian."

"It is an easy language. The further west you go the straighter and the easier it becomes."

The *Gran Maestro* brought the breakfast and the odor of it, although it did not spread through the room, due to the silver covers on the dishes, came to them steady and as broiled bacon and kidneys, with the dark lusterless smell of grilled mushrooms added.

"It looks lovely," the girl said. "Thank you very much, *Gran Maestro.* Should I talk American?" she asked the Colonel. She extended her hand to the *Gran Maestro* lightly, and fastly, so that it darted as a rapier does, and said, "Put it there, Pal. This grub is tops."

The *Gran Maestro* said, "Thank you, my lady.

"Should I have said chow instead of grub?" the girl asked the Colonel.

"They are really interchangeable."

"Did they talk like that out West when you were a boy? What would you say at breakfast?"

"Breakfast was served, or offered up, by the cook. He would say, 'Come and get it, you sons of bitches, or I'll throw it away.' "

"I must learn that for in the country. Sometimes when we have the British Ambassador and his dull wife for dinner I will teach the footman, who will announce dinner, to say, 'Come and get it, you son of bitches, or we will throw it away.' "

"He'd devaluate," the Colonel said. "At any rate, it would be an interesting experiment."

"Tell me something I can say in true American to the pitted one if he comes in. I will just whisper it in his ear as though I were making a rendezvous, as they did in the old days."

"It would depend on how he looks. If he is very dejected looking, you might whisper to him, 'Listen, Mac. You hired out to be tough, didn't you?' "

"That's lovely," she said and repeated it in a voice she had

learned from Ida Lupino. “Can I say it to the *Gran Maestro?*”

“Sure. Why not. *Gran Maestro!*”

The *Gran Maestro* came over and leaned forward attentively.

“Listen, Mac. You hired out to be tough, didn’t you?” the girl hard-worded him.

“I did indeed,” the *Gran Maestro* said. “Thank you for stating it so exactly.”

“If that one comes in and you wish to speak to him after he has eaten, just whisper in his ear, ‘Wipe the egg off your chin, Jack, and straighten up and fly right.’ “

“I’ll remember it and I’ll practice it at home.”

“What are we going to do after breakfast?”

“Should we go up and look at the picture and see if it is of any value, I mean any good, in daylight?”

“Yes,” the Colonel said.

Chapter XXVII

Upstairs the room was already done and the Colonel, who had anticipated a possible messiness of locale, was pleased.

"Stand by it once," he said. Then remembered to add, "Please. "

She stood by it, and he looked at it from where he had looked at it last night.

"There's no comparison, of course," he said. "I don't mean likeness. The likeness is excellent."

"Was there supposed to be a comparison?" the girl asked, and swung her head back and stood there with the black sweater of the portrait.

"Of course not. But last night, and at first light, I talked to the portrait as though it were you."

"That was nice of you and shows it has served some useful purpose."

They were lying now on the bed and the girl said to him,

"Don't you ever close windows?"

"No. Do you?"

"Only when it rains." "How much alike are we?"

"I don't know. We never had much of a chance to find out."

"We've never had a fair chance. But we've had enough of a chance for me to know."

"And when you know what the hell have you got?" the Colonel asked.

"I don't know. Something better than there is, I suppose."

"Sure. We ought to try for that. I don't believe in limited objectives. Sometimes you're forced to, though."

“What is your great sorrow?”

“Other people’s orders,” he said. “What’s yours?”

“You.”

“I don’t want to be a sorrow. I’ve been a sorry son of a bitch many times. But I never was anybody’s sorrow.”

“Well you are mine now.”

“All right,” he said. “We’ll take it that way.”

“You’re nice to take it that way. You’re very kind this morning. I’m so ashamed about how things are. Please hold me very close and let’s not talk, or think, about how things might have been different.”

“Daughter, that’s one of the few things I know how to do”

“You know many, manythings. Don’t say such a thing.”

“Sure,” the Colonel said. “I know how to fight forwards and how to fight backwards and what else?”

“About pictures and about books and about life.”

“That’s easy. You just look at the pictures without prejudice, and you read the books with as open a mind as you have, and you live life.”

“Don’t take off your tunic, please.

“All right.”

“You do anything when I say please.”

“I have done things without.”

“Not very often.”

“No,” the Colonel agreed. “Please is a pretty word.”

“Please, please, please.”

“*Per piacere.* It means for pleasure. I wish we always talked Italian.”

“We could in the dark. Although there are things that say better in English.

“I love you my last true and only love,” she quoted. “When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed. And out of the cradle endlessly rocking. And come and get it, you sons of bitches, or I’ll throw it

away. You don't want those in other languages do you, Richard?"

"No."

"Kiss me again, please."

"Unnecessary please."

"I would probably end up as an unnecessary please myself. That is the good thing about you going to die that you can't leave me."

"That's a little rough," the Colonel said. "Watch your beautiful mouth a little on that."

"I get rough when you get rough," she said. "You wouldn't want me to be completely otherwise?"

"I would not want you to be in any way other than you are and I love you truly, finally and for good."

"You say nice things very clearly sometimes. What was it happened with you and your wife, if I may ask?"

"She was an ambitious woman and I was away too much."

"You mean she went away, from ambition, when you only were away from duty?"

"Sure," the Colonel said and remembered, as unbitterly as he could. "She had more ambition than Napoleon and about the talent of the average High School Valedictorian."

"Whatever that is," the girl said. "But let's not speak about her. I'm sorry I asked the question. She must be sad that she is not with you."

"No. She is too conceited ever to be sad, and she married me to advance herself in Army circles, and have better contacts for what she considered her profession, or her art. She was a journalist."

"But they are dreadful," the girl said.

"I agree."

"But you couldn't have married a woman journalist that kept on being that?"

"I told you I made mistakes," the Colonel said.

"Let's talk about something nice."

"Let's."

“But that was terrible. How could you have done such a thing?”

“I don’t know. I could tell you in detail but let’s skip it.”

“Please let’s skip it. But I had no idea it was something as awful as that. You wouldn’t do such a thing now, would you?”

“I promise you, my sweet.”

“But you don’t ever write to her?”

“Of course not.”

“You wouldn’t tell her about us, so she could write about it?”

“No. I told her about things once, and she wrote about them. But that was in another country and besides the wench is dead.”

“Is she really dead?”

“Deader than Phoebus the Phoenician. But she doesn’t know it yet.”

“What would you do if we were together in the Piazza and you saw her?”

“I’d look straight through her to show her how dead she was.”

“Thank you very much,” the girl said. “You know that another woman, or a woman in memory, is a terrible thing for a young girl to deal with when she is still without experience.”

“There isn’t any other woman,” the Colonel told her and his eyes were bad and remembering. “Nor is there any woman of memory.”

“Thank you very much,” the girl said. “When I look at you I believe it truly. But please never look at me nor think of me like that.”

“Should we hunt her down and hang her to a high tree?” the Colonel said with anticipation.

“No. Let us forget her.”

“She is forgotten,” the Colonel said. And, strangely enough, she was. It was strange because she had been present in the room for a moment, and she had very nearly caused a panic; which is one of the strangest things there is, the Colonel thought. He knew about panics.

But she was gone now, for good and forever; cauterized;

exorcised and with the eleven copies of her reclassification papers, in which was included the formal, notarized act of divorcement, in triplicate.

"She is forgotten," the Colonel said. It was quite true.

"I'm so pleased," the girl said. "I don't know why they ever let her into the hotel."

"We're enough alike," the Colonel said. "We better not carry it too God damned far."

"You can hang her if you wish because she is why we cannot marry."

"She's forgotten," the Colonel told her. "Maybe she will take a good look at herself in the mirror sometime and hang herself."

"Now that she is out of the room we should wish her no bad luck. But, as a good Venetian, I wish that she were dead."

"So do I," the Colonel said. "And now, since she is not, let us forget her for keeps."

"For keeps and for always," the girl said. "I hope that is the correct diction. Or in Spanish *para sempre.*"

"Para sempre and his brother," the Colonel said.

Chapter XXVIII

They lay together now and did not speak and the Colonel felt her heart beat. It is easy to feel a heart beat under a black sweater knitted by someone in the family, and her dark hair lay, long and heavy, over his good arm. It isn't heavy, he thought, it is lighter than anything there is. She lay, quiet and loving, and whatever it was that they possessed was in complete communication. He kissed her on the mouth, gently and hungrily, and then it was as though there was static, suddenly, when communications had been perfect.

"Richard," she said. "I'm sorry about things."

"Never be sorry," the Colonel said. "Never discuss casualties, Daughter."

"Say it again."

"Daughter."

"Will you tell me some happy things I can have for during the week and some more of war for my education?"

"Let's skip war."

"No. I need it for my education."

"I do too," the Colonel said. "Not maneuvers. You know, in our army once, a general officer through chicanery obtained the plan of the maneuver. He anticipated every move of the enemy force and comported himself so brilliantly that he was promoted over many better men. And that was why we got smacked one time. That and the prevalence of weekends."

"We're on a weekend now."

"I know," the Colonel said. "I can still count up to seven."

"But are you bitter about everything?"

“No. It is just that I am half a hundred years old and I know things.”

“Tell me something more about Paris because I love to think of you and Paris in the week.”

“Daughter, why don’t you layoff Paris?”

“But I’ve been in Paris, and I will go back there again, and I want to know. It is the loveliest city in the world, next to our own, and I want to know some things truly to take with me.”

“We will go together and I will tell you there.”

“Thank you. But tell me a little now for this week only.”

“Leclerc was a highborn jerk as I think that I’ve explained. Very brave, very arrogant, and extremely ambitious. He is dead, as I said.”

“Yes, you told me.”

“They say you should never speak ill of the dead. But I think it is the best time to speak truly of them. I have never said anything of a dead that I would not say to his face,” and he added, “in spades.”

“Let’s not talk about him. I have reclassified him in my mind.”

“What do you want then; picturesque?”

“Yes please. I have bad taste from reading the illustrated papers. But I will read Dante all week while you are gone. I’ll go to mass each morning. That should be enough.”

“Go to Harry’s before lunch too.”

“I will,” she said. “Please tell me some picturesque.”

“Don’t you think we might better just go to sleep?”

“How can we go to sleep now when we have so little time? Feel this,” she said and pushed her whole head up under his chin until she forced his head back.

“All right, I’ll talk.”

“Give me your hand first to hold. I’ll have it in my hand when I read the Dante and do the other things.”

“Dante was an execrable character. More conceited than Leclerc.”

"I know. But he did not write execrably."

"No. Leclerc could fight too. Excellently."

"Now tell me."

Her head was on his chest now, and the Colonel said, "Why did you not want me to take off the tunic?"

"I like to feel the buttons. Is it wrong?"

"I'll be a sad son of a bitch," the Colonel said. "How many people fought in your family?"

"Everybody," she said. "Always. They were traders as well and several of them were Doges of this city as you know."

"But they all fought?"

"All," she said. "As far as I know."

"OK," the Colonel said. "I'll tell you any God damn thing you want to know."

"Just something picturesque. As bad or worst; than in the illustrated papers."

"*Domenica del Carriere* or *Tribuna Illustrata?*"

"Worse if possible."

"Kiss me first."

She kissed him kind, and hard, and desperately, and the Colonel could not think about any fights or any picturesque or strange incidents. He only thought of her and how she felt and how close life comes to death when there is ecstasy. And what the hell is ecstasy and what's ecstasy's rank and serial number? And how does her black sweater feel. And who made all her smoothness and delight and the strange pride and sacrifice and wisdom of a child? Yes, ecstasy is what you might have had and instead you draw sleep's other brother.

Death is a lot of shit, he thought. It comes to you in small fragments that hardly show where it has entered. It comes, sometimes, atrociously. It can come from unboiled water; an unpulled-up mosquito boot, or it can come with the great, white-hot, clanging roar we have lived with. It comes in small cracking

whispers that precede the noise of the automatic weapon. It can come with the smoke-emitting arc of the grenade, or the sharp, cracking drop of the mortar.

I have seen it come, loosening itself from the bomb rack, and falling with that strange curve. It comes in the metallic rending crash of a vehicle, or the simple lack of traction on a slippery road.

It comes in bed to most people, I know, like love's opposite number. I have lived with it nearly all my life and the dispensing of it has been my trade. But what can I tell this girl now on this cold, windy morning in the Gritti Palace Hotel?

"What would you like to know, Daughter?" he asked her.

"Everything."

"All right," the Colonel said. "Here goes."

Chapter XXIX

They lay on the pleasantly hard, new-made bed with their legs pressed tight against one another, and her head was on his chest, and her hair spread across his old hard neck; and he told her.

"We landed without much opposition. They had the true opposition at the other beach. Then we had to link up with the people who had been dropped, and take and secure various towns, and then we took Cherbourg. This was difficult, and had to be done very fast, and the orders were from a General called Lightning Joe that you never would have heard of. Good General."

"Go on, please. You spoke about Lightning Joe before."

"After Cherbourg we had everything. I took nothing but an Admiral's compass because I had a small boat at that time on Chesapeake Bay. But we had all the Wehrmacht stamped Martell and some people had as much as six million German printed French francs. They were good until a year ago, and at that time they were worth fifty to the dollar, and many a man has a tractor now instead of simply one mule who knew how to send them home through his Esses, or sometimes his Gs.

"I never stole anything except the compass because I thought it was bad luck to steal, unnecessarily, in war. But I drank the cognac and I used to try to figure out the different corrections on the compass when I had time. The compass was the only friend I had, and the telephone was my life. We had more wire strung than there are cunts in Texas."

"Please keep telling me and be as little rough as you can. I don't know what the word means and I don't want to know."

“Texas is a big state,” the Colonel said. “That is why I used it and its female population as a symbol. You cannot say more cunts than Wyoming because there are less than thirty thousand there, perhaps, hell, make it fifty, and there was a lot of wire, and you kept stringing it and rolling it up, and stringing it again.”

“Go on.”

“We will cut to the breakthrough,” the Colonel said. “Please tell me if this bores you.”

“No.”

“So we made the mucking breakthrough,” the Colonel said, and now his head was turned to her head, and he was not lecturing; he was confessing.

“The first day most of them came over and dropped the Christmas tree ornaments that confuse the other people’s radar and it was called off. We were ready to go but they called it off. Quite properly I am sure. I love the very highest brass like I love the pig’s you know.”

“Tell it to me and don’t be bad.”

“Conditions were not propitious, “ the Colonel said. “So the second day we were for it, as our British cousins, who could not fight their way out of a wet tissue towel, say, and overcame the people of the wild, blue yonder.

“They were still taking off from the fields where they lived on that green-grassed aircraft carrier that they called England, when we saw the first of them.

“Shining, bright and beautiful, because they had scraped the invasion paint by then, or maybe they had not. My memory is not exact about this part.

“Anyway, Daughter, you could see the line of them going back toward the east further than you could see. It was like a great train. They were high in the sky and never more beautiful. I told my S-2 that we should call them the Valhalla Express. Are you tired of it?”

“No. I can see the Valhalla Express. We never saw it in such

numbers. But we saw it. Many times."

"We were back two thousand yards from where we were to take off from. You know what two thousand yards is, Daughter, in a war when you are attacking?"

"No. How could I?"

"Then the front part of the Valhalla Express dropped coloured smoke and turned and went home. This smoke was dropped accurately, and clearly showed the target which was the Kraut positions. They were good positions and it *might* have been impossible to move him out of them without something mighty and picturesque such as we were experiencing.

"Then, Daughter, the next sections of the Valhalla express dropped everything in the world on the Krauts and where they lived and worked to hold us up. Later it looked as though all of the earth had erupted and the prisoners that we took shook as a man shakes when his malaria hits him. They were very brave boys from the Sixth Parachute Division and they all shook and could not control it though they tried.

"So you can see it was a good bombing. Just the thing we always need in this life. Make them tremble in the fear of justice and of might.

"So then daughter, not to bore you, the wind was from the east and the smoke began to blow back in our direction. The heavies were bombing on the smoke line and the smoke line was now over us. Therefore they bombed us the same as they had bombed the Krauts. First it was the heavies, and no one need ever worry about hell who was there that day. Then, to really make the breakthrough good and to leave as few people as possible on either side, the mediums came over and bombed who was left. Then we made the breakthrough as soon as the Valhalla Express had gone home, stretching in its beauty and its majesty from that part of France to all over England."

If a man has a conscience, the Colonel thought, he might think

about air power some time.

"Give me a glass of that Valpolicella," the Colonel said, and remembered to add, "please."

"Excuse me," he said. "Be comfortable, honey dog, please. You asked me to tell you."

"I'm not your honey dog. That must be someone else."

"Correct. You're my last and true and only love. Is that correct? But you asked me to tell you."

"Please tell me," the girl said. "I'd like to be your honey dog if I knew how to do it. But I am only a girl from this town that loves you."

"We'll operate on that," the Colonel said. "And I love you. I probably picked up that phrase in the Philippines."

"Probably," the girl said. "But I would rather be your straight girl."

"You are," the Colonel said. "Complete with handles and with the flag on top."

"Please don't be rough," she said. "Please love me true and tell me as true as you can, without hurting yourself in any way."

"I'll tell you true," he said. "As true as I can tell and let it hurt who it hurts. It is better that you hear it from me, if you have curiosity on this subject, than that you read it in some book with stiff covers."

"Please don't be rough. Just tell me true and hold me tight and tell me true until you are purged of it; if that can be."

"I don't need to purge," he said. "Except heavies being . used tactically. I have nothing against them if they use them right even if they kill you. But for ground support give me a man like Pete Quesada. There is a man who will boot them in."

"Please."

"If you ever want to quit a beat-up character like me that guy could give you ground support."

"You are not beat-up, whatever that is, and I love you."

“Please give me two tablets from that bottle and pour the glass of Valpolicella that you neglected to pour, and I will tell you some of the rest of it.”

“You don’t have to. You don’t have to tell me and I know now it is not good for you. Especially not the Valhalla Express day. I am not an inquisitor; or whatever the female of inquisitor is. Let us just lie quietly and look out of the window, and watch and see what happens on our Grand Canal.”

“Maybe we better. Who gives a damn about the war anyway?”·

“You and me, maybe,” she said and stroked his head. “Here are the two things from the square bottle. Here is the glass of decanted vino. I’ll send you better from our own estates. Please let us sleep a little while. Please be a good boy and we just lie together and love each other. Please put your hand here.”

“My good or my bad?”

“Your bad,” the girl said. “The one I love and must think about all week. I cannot keep it like you keep the stones.”

“They’re in the safe,” the Colonel said. “In your name,” he added.

“Let’s just sleep and not talk about any material things nor any sorrows.”

“The hell with sorrows,” the Colonel said with his eyes closed and his head resting lightly on the black sweater that was his fatherland. You have to have some damned fatherland, he thought. Here is mine.

“Why aren’t you President?” the girl asked. “You could be an excellent president.”

“Me President? I served in the Montana National Guard when I was sixteen. But I never wore a bow tie in my life and I am not, nor ever have been, an unsuccessful haberdasher. I have none of the qualifications for the Presidency. I couldn’t even head the opposition even though I don’t have to sit on telephone books to have my picture taken. Nor am a no-fight general. Hell, I never

even was at SHAEF. I couldn't even be an elder statesman. I'm not old enough. Now we are governed in some way, by the dregs. We are governed by what you find in the bottom of dead beer glasses that whores have dunked their cigarettes in. The place has not even been swept out yet and they have an amateur pianist beating on the box."

"I don't understand it because my American is so in-complete. But it sounds awful. But don't be angry about it. Let me be angry for you."

"Do you know what an unsuccessful haberdasher is?

"No."

"It is not discreditable. There are many of them in our country. There is at least one in every town. No, Daughter, I am only a fighting soldier and that is the lowest thing on earth. In that you run for Arlington, if they return the body. The family has a choice."

"Is Arlington nice?"

"I don't know," the Colonel said. "I was never buried there."

"Where would you like to be buried?"

"Up in the hills," he said, making a quick decision. "On any part of the high ground where we beat them."

"I suppose you should be buried on the Grappa."

"On the dead angle of any shell-pocked slope if they would graze cattle over me in the summer time."

"Do they have cattle there?"

"Sure. They always have cattle where there is good grass in the summer, and the girls of the highest houses, the strong built ones, the houses *and* the girls, that resist the snow in winter, trap foxes in the fall after they bring the cattle down. They feed from pole-stacked hay."

"And you don't want Arlington or Père Lachaise or what we have here?"

"Your miserable boneyard."

"I know it is the most unworthy thing about the town. The city

rather. I learned to call cities towns from you. But I will see that you go where you wish to go and I will go with you if you like."

"I would not like. That is the one thing we do alone. Like going to the bathroom."

"Please do not be rough."

"I meant that I would love to have you with me. But it is very egotistical and an ugly process."

He stopped, and thought truly, but off-key, and said, "No. You get married and have five sons and call them all Richard."

"The lionhearted," the girl said, accepting the situation without even a glance, and playing what there was she held as you put down all the cards, having counted exactly.

"The crap-hearted," the Colonel said. "The unjust bitter criticizer who speaks badly of everyone."

"Please don't be rough in talking," the girl said. "And remember you speak worst of all about yourself. But hold me as close as we can and let's think about nothing."

He held her as close as he could and he tried to think about nothing.

Chapter XXX

The Colonel and the girl lay quietly on the bed and the Colonel tried to think of nothing; as he had thought of nothing so many times in so many places. But it was no good now. It would not work anymore because it was too late.

They were not Othello and Desdemona, thank God, although it was the same town and the girl was certainly better looking than the Shakespearean character, and the Colonel had fought as many, or more times than the garrulous Moor.

They are excellent soldiers, he thought. The damfied Moors. But how many of them have we killed in my time? I think we killed more than a generation if you count the final Moroccan campaign against Abdel Krim. And each one you have to kill separately. Nobody ever killed them in mass, as we killed Krauts before they discovered *Einheit.*

"Daughter," he said. "Do you want me to really tell you, so you will know, if I am not rough telling it?"

"I would rather have you tell me than anything. Then we can share it."

"It cuts pretty thin for sharing," the Colonel said. "It's all yours, Daughter. And it's only the highlights. You wouldn't understand the campaigns in detail, and few others would. Rommel might. But they always had him under wraps in France and, besides, we had destroyed his communications. The two tactical airforces had; ours and the RAF. But I wish I could talk over certain things with him. I'd like to talk with him and with Ernst Udet."

"Just tell me what you wish and take this glass of Valpolicella

and stop if it makes you feel badly. Or don't tell it at all."

"I was a spare-parts Colonel at the start," the Colonel explained carefully. "They are hang-around Colonels, which are given to a Division Commander to replace one that he may have killed, or that are relieved. Almost none are killed; but many are relieved. All the good ones are promoted. Fairly fast when the thing starts to move sort of like a forest fire."

"Go on, please. Should you take your medicine?"

"The hell with my medicine," the Colonel said. "And the hell with SHAEF."

"You explained that to me," the girl said.

"I wish the hell you were a soldier with your straight true brain and your beauty memory."

"I would wish to be a soldier if I could fight under you."

"Never fight under me," the Colonel said. "I'm cagey. But I'm not lucky. Napoleon wanted them lucky and he was right."

"We've had some luck."

"Yes," the Colonel said. "Good and bad." "But it was all luck."

"Sure," the Colonel said. "But you can't fight on luck. It is just something that you need. The people who fought on luck are all gloriously dead like Napoleon's horse cavalry."

"Why do you hate cavalry? Almost all the good boys I know were in the three good regiments of cavalry, or in the navy."

"I don't hate anything, Daughter," the Colonel said, and drank a little of the light, dry, red wine which was as friendly as the house of your brother, if you and your brother are good friends. "I only have a point of view, arrived at after careful consideration, and an estimate of their capabilities!'

"Are they not really good?"

"They are worthless," the Colonel said. Then, remembering to be kind, added, "In our time."

"Every day is a disillusion."

"No. Every day is a new and fine illusion. But you can cut out

everything phony about the illusion as though you would cut it with a straight-edge razor."

"Please never cut me."

"You're not cuttable."

"Would you kiss me and hold me tight, and we both look at the Grand Canal where the light is lovely now, and you tell me more?"

When they were looking out at the Grand Canal where the light was, indeed, lovely, the Colonel went on, "I got a regiment because the Commanding General relieved a boy that I had known since he was eighteen years old. He was not a boy anymore, of course. It was too much regiment for him and it was all the regiment I ever could have hoped for in this life until I lost it." He added, "Under orders, of course."

"How do you lose a regiment?"

"When you are working around to get up on the high ground and all you would have to do is send in a flag, and they would talk it over and come out if you were right. The professionals are very intelligent and these Krauts were all professionals; not the fanatics. The phone rings and somebody calls from Corps who has his orders from Army or maybe Army Group or maybe even SHAEF, because they read the name of the town in a newspaper, possibly sent in from Spa, by a correspondent, and the order is to take it by assault. It's important because it got into the newspapers. You have to take it.

"So you leave one company dead along a draw. You lose one company complete and you destroy three others. The tanks get smacked even as fast as they could move and they could move fast both ways.

"They hit them one, two, three, four, five.

"Three men usually get out of the five (that are inside) and they run like broken field runners that have been shaken loose in a play when you are Minnesota and the others are Beloit, Wisconsin.

"Do I bore you?"

“No. I do not understand the local allusions. But you can explain them when you care to. Please keep on telling me.”

“You get into the town, and some handsome jerk puts an air mission on you. This mission might have been ordered and never cancelled. Let’s give everyone the benefit of the doubt. I’m just telling you about things in a general way. It is better not to be specific and a civilian wouldn’t understand it. Not even you.

“This air mission does not help much, Daughter. Because maybe you cannot stay in the town because you have got too few people in, and by now, you are digging them out of rubble; or leaving them in rubble. There are two schools of thought on that. So they say to take it by assault. They repeat this.

“This has been rigidly confirmed by some politician in uniform who has never killed in his life, except with his mouth over the telephone, or on paper, nor ever has been hit. Figure him as our next President if you want him. Figure him any way you like. But figure him and his people, the whole great business establishment, so far back that the best way to communicate with them rapidly would be by racing carrier pigeons. Except, with the amount of security they maintained for their proper persons, they would probably have their anti-aircraft shoot the pigeons down. If they could hit them.

“So you do it again. Then I will tell you what it looks like.”

The Colonel looked up at the play of the light on the ceiling. It was reflected, in part, from the Canal. It made strange but steady movements, changing, as the current of a trout stream changes, but remaining, still changing as the sun moved.

Then he looked at his great beauty, with her strange, dark, grown-up child’s face that broke his heart, that he would be leaving before 1335 (that was sure) and he said, “Let’s not talk about the war, Daughter.”

“Please,” she said. “Please. Then I will have it all this week.”

“That’s a short sentence. I mean using the word sentence as a

jail sentence."

"You don't know how long a week can be when you are nineteen."

"Several times I have known how long an hour can be," the Colonel said. "I could tell you how long two minutes and a half can be."

"Please tell me."

"Well I had two days' leave in Paris between the Schnee-Eifel fight and this one, and due to my friendship with one or two people I was privileged to be present at some sort of a meeting, where only the accredited and trusted were present, and General Walter Bedell Smith explained to all of us how easy the operation that later took the name of Hurtgen Forest would be. It was not really Hurtgen Forest. That was only a small sector. It was the Stadtswald and it was where the German High Command had figured, exactly, to fight after Aachen had been taken and the road into Germany breached. I hope I am not boring you."

"You never bore me. Nothing about fighting bores me except lies."

"You're a strange girl."

"Yes," she said. "I've known that for quite a long time."

"Would you really like to fight?"

"I don't know if I could do it. But I could try if you taught me."

"I'll never teach you. I'll just tell you anecdotes."

"Sad stories of the death of kings."

"No. GIs somebody christened them. God how I hate that word and how it was used. Comic book readers. All from some certain place. Most of them there unwillingly. Not all. But they all read a paper called *The Stars and Stripes* and you had to get your unit into it, or you were unsuccessful as a commander. I was mostly unsuccessful. I tried to like the correspondents and there were some very good ones present at this meeting. I will not name names because I might omit some fine ones and that would be un-just.

There were good ones that I don't remember. Then, there were draft dodgers, phonies who claimed they were wounded if a piece of spent metal ever touched them, people who wore the purple heart from jeep accidents, insiders, cowards, liars, thieves and telephone racers. There were a few deads missing from this briefing. They had deads too. A big percentage. But none of the deads were present as I said. They had women at it though in wonderful uniforms,"

"But how did you ever marry one?"

"By mistake as I explained before."

"Go on and tell me."

"There were more maps in the room than Our Lord could read on his best day," the Colonel continued. "There were the Big Picture, the Semi-Big Picture and the Super-Big-Picture. All these people pretended to understand them, as did the boys with the pointers, a sort of half-assed billiard cue that they used for explanation."

"Don't say rough words. I don't know, even, what half-assed means."

"Shortened, or abbreviated in an inefficient manner," the Colonel explained. "Or deficient as an instrument, or in character. It's an old word. You could probably find it in Sanscrit."

"Please tell me."

"What for? Why should I perpetuate ignominy just with my mouth?"

"I'll write it if you want. I can write truly what I hear or think. I would make mistakes of course."

"You are a lucky girl if you can write truly what you hear or think. But don't you ever write one word of this."

He resumed, "The place is full of correspondents dressed according to their taste. Some are cynical and some are extremely eager.

"To ride herd on them, and to wield the pointers, there is a group of pistol-slappers. We call a pistol-slapper a non-fighting

man, disguised in uniform, or you might even call it costume, who gets an erection every time the weapon slaps against his thighs. Incidentally, Daughter, the weapon, not the old pistol, the real pistol, has missed more people in combat than probably any weapon in the world. Don't ever let anyone give you one unless you want to hit people on the head with it in Harry's Bar."

"I never wanted to hit anyone; except perhaps Andrea."

"If you ever hit Andrea, hit him with the barrel; not with the butt. The butt is awfully slow, and it misses and if it lands you get blood on your hands when you put the gun away. Also please do not ever hit Andrea because he is my friend. I do not think he would be easy to hit either."

"No. I do not think so either. Please tell me some more about the meeting, or the assembly. I think I could recognize a pistol slapper now. But I would like to be checked out more thoroughly."

"Well, the pistol-slappers, in all the pride of their pistol-slappery, were awaiting the arrival of the great General who was to explain the operation.

"The correspondents were muttering, or twittering, and the intelligent ones were glum or passively cheerful. Every-body sat on folding chairs as for a Chautauqua lecture. I'm sorry about these local terms; but we are a local people.

"In comes the General. He is no pistol-slapper, but a big businessman; an excellent politician, the executive type. The Army is the biggest business, at that moment, in the world. He takes the half-assed pointer, and he shows us, with complete conviction, and without forebodings, exactly what the attack will be, why we are making it, and how facilely it will succeed. There is no problem."

"Go on," the girl said. "Please let me fill your glass and you, please look at the light on the ceiling."

"Fill it and I'll look at the light and I will go on.

"This high pressure salesman, and I say this with no disrespect, but with admiration for all his talents, or his talent, also told what

we would have of the necessary. There would be no lack of anything. The organization called SHAEF was then based on a town named Versailles outside of Paris. We would attack to the east of Aachen a distance of some 380 kilometers from where they were based.

"An army can get to be huge; but you can close up a little bit. They finally went as far forward as Rheims which was 240 kilometers from the fighting. That was many months later.

"I understand the necessity of the big executive being removed from contact with his working people. I understand about the size of the army and the various problems. I even understand logistics which is not difficult. But no one ever commanded from that far back in history."

"Tell me about the town."

"I'll tell you," the Colonel said. "But I don't want to hurt you."

"You never hurt me. We are an old town and we had fighting men, always. We respect them more than all others and I hope we understand them a little. We also know they are difficult. Usually, as people, they are very boring to women."

"Do I bore you?"

"What do you think?" the girl asked.

"I bore myself, Daughter."

"I don't think you do, Richard, you would not have done something all your life if you were bored by it. Don't lie to me please, darling, when we have so little time."

"I won't."

"Don't you see you need to tell me things to purge your bitterness? "

"I know I tell them to you."

"Don't you know I want you to die with the grace of a happy death? Oh I'm getting all mixed up. Don't let me get too mixed up."

"I won't, Daughter."

"Tell me some more please and be just as bitter as you want."

Chapter XXXI

“Listen, Daughter,” The Colonel said. “Now we will cut out all references to glamour and to high brass, even from Kansas, where the brass grows higher than osage-orange trees along your own road. It bears a fruit you can’t eat and it is purely Kansan. Nobody but Kansans ever had anything to do with it; except maybe us who fought. We ate them every day. Osage oranges,” he added. “Only we called them K Rations. They weren’t bad. C Rations were bad. Ten in ones were good.

“So we fought. It is dull but it is informative. This is the way it goes if anyone is ever interested; which I doubt.

“It goes like this: 1300 Red S-3: White jumped off on time. Red said they were waiting to tie in behind White. 1305 (that is one o’clock and five minutes after in the after-noon, if you can remember that, Daughter) Blue S-3, you know what an S-3 is I hope, says, ‘Let us know when you move.’ Red said they were waiting to tie in behind White.

“You can see how easy it is,” the Colonel told the girl. “Everybody ought to do it before breakfast.”

“We cannot all be combat infantrymen,” the girl told him softly. “I respect it more than anything except good, honest fliers. Please talk, I’m taking care of you.”

“Good fliers are very good and should be respected as such,” the Colonel said.

He looked up at the light on the ceiling and he was completely desperate at the remembrance of his loss of his battalions, and of individual people. He could never hope to have such a regiment,

ever. He had not built it. He had inherited it. But, for a time, it had been his great joy. Now every second man in it was dead and the others nearly all were wounded. In the belly, the head, the feet or the hands, the neck, the back, the lucky buttocks, the unfortunate chest and the other places. Tree burst wounds hit men where they would never be wounded in open country. And all the wounded were wounded for life.

"It was a good regiment," he said. "You might even say it was a beautiful regiment until I destroyed it under other people's orders."

"But why do you have to obey them when you know better?"

"In our army you obey like a dog," the Colonel explained. "You always hope you have a good master."

"What kind of masters do you get?"

"I've only had two good ones so far. After I reached a certain level of command, many nice people, but only two good masters."

"Is that why you are not a General now? I would love it if you were a General."

"I'd love it too," the Colonel said. "But maybe not with the same intensity."

"Would you try to sleep, please, to please me?"

"Yes," the Colonel said.

"You see, I thought that if you slept you might get rid of them, just being asleep."

"Yes. Thank you very much," he said.

There was nothing to it, gentlemen. All a man need ever do is obey.

Chapter XXXII

“You slept quite well for a time,” the girl told him, lovingly and gently. “Is there anything you would like me to do?”

“Nothing,” the Colonel said. “Thank you.”

Then he turned bad and he said, “Daughter I could sleep good straight up and down in the electric chair with my pants slit and my hair clipped. I sleep as, and when, I need it.”

“I can never be like that,” the girl said, sleepily. “I sleep when I am sleepy.”

“You’re lovely,” the Colonel told her. “And you sleep better than anyone ever slept.”

“I am not proud of it,” the girl said, very sleepily. “It is just something that I do.”

“Do it, please.”

“No. Tell me very low and soft and put your bad hand in mine.”

“The hell with my bad hand,” the Colonel said. “Since when was it so bad.”

“It’s bad,” the girl said. “Badder, or worse, than you will ever know. Please tell me about combat without being too brutal.”

“An easy assignment,” the Colonel said. “I’ll skip the times. The weather is cloudy and the place is 986342. What’s the situation? We are smoking the enemy with artillery and mortar. S-3 advises that S-6 wants Red to button up by 1700. S-6 wants you to button up and use plenty of artillery. White reports that they are in fair shape. S-6 informs that A company will swing around and tie in with B.

“B Company was stopped first by enemy action and stayed there

of their own accord. S-6 isn't doing so good. This is unofficial. He wants more artillery but there isn't anymore artillery.

"You wanted combat for what? I don't know really why. Or really know why. Who wants true combat? But here it is, Daughter, on the telephone and later I will put in the sounds and smells and anecdotes about who was killed when and where if you want them."

"I only want what you will tell me."

"I'll tell you how it was," the Colonel said, "and General Walter Bedell Smith doesn't know how it was yet. Though, probably, I am wrong, as I have been so many times."

"I'm glad we don't have to know him or the nylon-smooth man," the girl said.

"We won't have to know them this side of hell," the Colonel assured her. "And I will have a detail guarding the gates of hell so that no such characters enter."

"You sound like Dante," she said sleepily.

"I am Mister Dante," he said. "For the moment."

And for a while he was and he drew all the circles. They were as unjust as Dante's but he drew them.

Chapter XXXIII

"I will skip the detailed part since you are, justifiably, and should be, sleepy," the Colonel said. He watched, again, the strange play of the light on the ceiling. Then he looked at the girl, who was more beautiful than any girl that he had ever seen, ever.

He had seen them come and go, and they go faster, when they go, than any other thing that flies. They can go faster from fair beauty to the knocker's shop than any other animal, he thought. But I believe that this one could hold the pace and stay the course. The dark ones last the best, he thought, and look at the bony structure in that face. This one has a fine blood line too, and she can go forever. Most of our own lovely beauties come from soda counters, and they do not know their grandfather's last name, unless, maybe, it was Schultz. Or Schlitz, he thought.

This is the wrong attitude to take, he said to himself; since he did not wish to express any of these sentiments to the girl, who would not like them anyway, and was soundly sleepy now the way a cat is when it sleeps within itself.

"Sleep well, my dearest lovely, and I will just tell it for nothing."

The girl was asleep, still holding his bad hand, that he despised, and he could feel her breathe, as the young breathe when they are easily asleep.

The Colonel told her all about it; but he did not utter it.

So after I had the privilege of hearing General Walter Bedell Smith explain the facility of the attack, we made it. There was the Big Red One, who believed their own publicity. There was the Ninth, which was a better Division than we were. There was us,

who had always done it when they asked for you to do it.

We had no time to read comic books, and we had no time for practically nothing, because we always moved before first light. This is difficult and you have to throw away the Big Picture and be a division.

We wore a four-leaf clover, which meant nothing except among ourselves, who all loved it. And every time I ever see it the same thing happens in my inner guts. Some people thought that it was ivy. But it was not. It was a four-leaf dover disguised as ivy.

The orders were that we would attack with the Big Red One, the First Infantry Division of the Army of the United States, and they, and their Calypso singing PRO never let you forget it. He was a nice guy. And it was his job.

But you get fed up with horseshit unless you like the aroma or the taste. I never liked it. Although I loved to walk through cow shit when I was a kid and feel it between my toes. But horseshit bores you. It bores me very rapidly, and I can detect it at over one thousand yards.

So we attacked, the three of us in line, exactly where the Germans wished us to attack. We will not mention General Walter Bedell Smith any further. He is not the villain. He only made the promises and explained how it would go. There are no villains, I presume, in a Democracy. He was only just as wrong as hell. Period, he added in his mind.

The patches had all been removed even as far back as the rear echelon so that no Kraut would know that it was us, the three he knew so well, who were going to attack. We were going to attack with the three of us in line and nothing in reserve. I won't try to explain what that means, Daughter. But it isn't any good. And the place we were going to fight in, which I had taken a good look at, was going to be Passchendaele with tree bursts. I say that too much. But I think it too much.

The poor bloody twenty-eighth which was up on our right had

been bogged down for some time and so there was pretty accurate information available about what conditions in those woods were going to be like. I think we could conservatively describe them as unfavorable.

Then we were ordered to commit one regiment before the attack started. That means that the enemy will get at least one prisoner which makes all the taking off of the Divisional patches silly. They would be waiting for us. They would be waiting for the old four leaf clover people who would go straight to hell like a mule and do it for one hundred and five days. Figures of course mean nothing to civilians. Nor to the characters from SHAEF we never saw ever in these woods. Incidentally, and of course these occurrences are always incidental at the SHAEF level, the regiment was destroyed. It was no one's bloody fault, especially not the fault of the man who commanded it. He was a man I would be glad to spend half my time in hell with; and may yet.

It certainly would be odd if instead of going to hell, as we always counted on, we should go to one of those Kraut joints like Valhalla and not be able to get along with the people. But maybe we could get a corner table with Rommel and Udet and it would be just like any winter sports hotel. It will probably be hell though and I don't even believe in hell.

Well anyway this regiment was rebuilt as American regiments always are by the replacement system. I won't describe it since you can always read about it in a book by somebody who was a replacement. It boils down, or distills, to the fact you stay in until you are hit badly or killed or go crazy and get section-eighted. But I guess it is logical and as good as any other, given the difficulties of transport. However it leaves a core of certain un-killed characters who know what the score is and no one of these characters liked the look of these woods much.

You could sum up their attitude in this phrase, "Don't shit me, Jack."

And since I had been an un-killed character for around twenty-eight years I could understand their attitude. But they were soldiers, so most of them got killed in those woods and when we took the three towns that looked so innocent and were really fortresses. They were just built to tempt us and we had no word on them at all. To continue to use the silly parlance of my trade: this could or could not be faulty intelligence.

"I feel terribly about the regiment," the girl said. She had wakened and spoken straight from sleep.

"Yes," said the Colonel. "So do I. Let's drink to it once. Then you go to sleep, Daughter please. The war is over and forgotten."

Please don't think that I am conceited, Daughter, he said, without speaking. His true love was sleeping again. She slept in a different way than his career girl had slept. He did not like to remember how the career girl slept, yes he did. But he wanted to forget it. She did not sleep pretty, he thought. Not like this girl who slept as though she were awake and alive; except she was asleep. Please sleep well, he thought.

Who the hell are you to criticize career girls? he thought. What miserable career did you attempt and have failed at?

I wished to be, and was, a General Officer in the Army of the United States. I have failed and I speak badly of all who have succeeded.

Then his contrition did not last, and he said to himself, "Except the brown-nosers, the five and ten and twenty percenters and all the jerks from wherever who never fought and hold commands."

They killed several men from the academy at Gettysburg. That was the big kill day of all kill days, when there was a certain amount of opposition by both sides.

Don't be bitter. They killed General McNair by mistake the day the Valhalla Express came over. Quit being bitter. People from the Academy were killed and there are statistics to prove it.

How can I remember if I am not bitter?

Be as bitter as you want. And tell the girl, now silently, and that will not hurt her, ever, because she is sleeping so lovely. He said lovely to himself since his thinking was often ungrammatical.

Chapter XXXIV

Sleep softly, my true love, and when you wake, this will be over and I will joke you out of trying to learn details of the *triste métier* of war and we will go to buy the little negro, or moor, carved in ebony with his fine features, and his jeweled turban. Then you will pin him on, and we will go to have a drink at Harry's and see whoever or whatever of our friends that will be afoot at that hour.

We will lunch at Harry's, or we'll come back here, and I will be packed. We will say good-bye and I will get into the *motoscafo* with Jackson, and make some cheerful crack to the *Gran Maestro* and wave to any other members of the Order, and ten to one, the way I feel right now, or two will get you thirty, we will not ever see one another again.

Hell, he said to no one, and certainly not aloud, I've felt this way before many fights and almost always at some time in the fall of the year, and always when leaving Paris. Probably it doesn't mean a thing.

Who gives a damn anyway except me and the *Gran Maestro* and this girl; I mean at command level.

I give very much of a damn myself. But I certainly should be trained and adjusted by this time not to give a muck for nothing; like the definition of a whore. A woman who does not etc.

But we won't think about that boy, lieutenant, captain, major, colonel, general sir. We will just lay it on the line once more and the hell with it, and with its ugly face that old Hieronymus Bosch really painted. But you can sheathe your scythe, old brother death, if you have got a sheath for it. Or, he added, thinking of Hurtgen

now, you can take your scythe and stick it up your ass.

It was Passchendaele with tree bursts, he told nobody except the wonder light on the ceiling. Then he looked at the girl, to see that she was sleeping well enough so even his thoughts would not hurt her.

Then he looked at the portrait and he thought, I have her in two positions, lying down, turned a little on her side, and looking at me straight in front. I'm a lucky son of a bitch and I should never be sad about anything.

Chapter XXXV

The first day there, we lost the three battalion commanders. One killed in the first twenty minutes and the other two hit later. This is only a statistic to a journalist. But good battalion commanders have never yet grown on trees; not even Christmas trees which was the basic tree of that woods. I do not know how many times we lost company commanders how many times over. But I could look it up.

They aren't made, nor grown, as fast as a crop of potatoes is either. We got a certain amount of replacements but I can remember thinking that it would be simpler, and more effective, to shoot them in the area where they detrucked, than to have to try to bring them back from where they would be killed and bury them. It takes men to bring them back, and gasoline, and men to bury them. These men might just as well be fighting and get killed too.

There was snow, or something, rain or fog, all the time and the roads had been mined as many as fourteen mines deep in certain stretches, so when the vehicles churned down to a new string deeper, in another part of the mud, you were always losing vehicles and, of course, the people that went with them.

Besides just mortaring it all to hell and having all the fire lanes taped for machine gun, and automatic weapon fire, they had the whole thing worked out and canalized so however you out-thought them you ran right into it. They also shelled you with heavy artillery fire and with at least one railway gun.

It was a place where it was extremely difficult for a man to stay alive even if all he did was be there. And we were attacking all the time, and every day.

Let's not think about it. The hell with it. Maybe two things I will think about and get rid of them. One was a bare-assed piece of hill that you had to cross to get into Grosshau.

Just before you had to make this run, which was under observation with fire by 88s, there was a little piece of dead ground where they could only hit you with a howitzer, only interdicting fires, or, from the right by mortar. When we cleaned it up we found they had good observation for their mortars there too.

This was a comparatively safe place, I'm really not lying, not me nor anybody else. You can't fool those that were in Hurtgen, and if you lied they would know it the minute you opened your mouth, Colonel or no Colonel.

We met a truck at this place and slowed up, and he had the usual gray face and he said, "Sir, there is a dead GI in the middle of the road up ahead, and every time any vehicle goes through they have to run over him, and I'm afraid it is making a bad impression on the troops."

"We'll get him off the road."

So we got him off the road.

And I can remember just how he felt, lifting him, and how he had been flattened and the strangeness of his flatness.

Then there was one other thing, I remember. We had put an awful lot of white phosphorus on the town before we got in for good, or whatever you would call it. That was the first time I ever saw a German dog eating a roasted German kraut. Later on I saw a cat working on him too. It was a hungry cat, quite nice looking, basically. You wouldn't think a good German cat would eat a good German soldier, would you Daughter? Or a good German dog eat a good German soldier's ass which had been roasted by white phosphorus.

How many could you tell like that? Plenty, and what good would they do? You could tell a thousand and they would not prevent war. People would say we are not fighting the Krauts and

besides the cat did not eat me nor my brother Gordon, because he was in the Pacific. Maybe land crabs ate Gordon. Or maybe he just deliquesced.

In Hurtgen they just froze up hard; and it was so cold they froze up with ruddy faces. Very strange. They all were gray and yellow like waxworks, in the summer. But once the winter really came they had ruddy faces.

Real soldiers never tell anyone what their own dead looked like, he told the portrait. And I'm through with this whole subject. And what about that company dead up the draw? What about them, professional soldier?

They're dead, he said. And I can hang and rattle.

Now who would join me in a glass of Valpolicella? What time do you think I should wake your opposite number, you girl? We have to get to that jewelry place. And I look forward to making jokes and to talking of the most cheerful things.

What's cheerful, portrait? You ought to know. You're smarter than I am, although you haven't been around as much.

All right, canvas girl, the Colonel told her, not saying it aloud, we'll drop the whole thing and in eleven minutes I will wake the live girl up, and we will go out on the town, and be cheerful and leave you here to be wrapped.

I didn't mean to be rude. I was just joking roughly. I don't wish to be rude ever because I will be living with you from now on. I hope, he added, and drank a glass of the wine.

Chapter XXXVI

It was a sharp, cold bright day, and they stood outside the window of the jeweler's shop and studied the two small negro heads and torsos that were carved in ebony and adorned with studded jewels. One was as good as the other, the Colonel thought.

"Which do you like the best, Daughter?"

"I think the one on the right. Don't you think he has the nicer face?"

"They both have nice faces. But I think I would rather have him attend you if it was the old days."

"Good. We'll take him. Let's go in and see them. I must ask the price."

"I will go in."

"No, let me ask the price. They will charge me less than they would charge you. After all you are a rich American."

"Et toi, Rimbaud?"

"You'd make an awfully funny Verlaine," the girl told him. "We'll be some other famous characters."

"Go on in, Majesty, and we'll buy the god damn jewel."

"You wouldn't make a very good Louis Sixteenth either."

"I'd get up in that tumbril with you and still be able to spit."

"Let's forget all the tumbrils and everyone's sorrows, and buy the small object and then we can walk to Cipriani's and be famous people."

Inside the shop they looked at the two heads and she asked the price, and then, there was some very rapid talk and the price was much lower. But still it was more money than the Colonel had.

“I’ll go to Cipriani’s and get some money.”

“No,” the girl said. Then to the clerk, “Put it in a box and send it to Cipriani’s and say the Colonel said to pay for it and hold it for him.”

“Please,” the clerk said. “Exactly as you say.”

They went out into the street and the sunlight and the unremitting wind.

“By the way,” the Colonel said. “Your stones are in the safe at the Gritti in your name.”

“Your stones.”

“No,” he told her, not rough, but to make her understand truly. “There are some things that a person cannot do. You know about that. You cannot marry me and I understand that, although I do not approve it.”

“Very well,” the girl said. “I understand. But would you take one for a lucky stone?”

“No. I couldn’t. They are too valuable.”

“But the portrait has value.”

“That is different.”

“Yes,” she agreed. “I suppose so. I think I begin to understand.”

“I would accept a horse from you, if I was poor and young, and riding very well. But I could not take a motorcar.”

“I understand it now very well. Where can we go now, at this minute, where you can kiss me?”

“In this side alley, if you know no one who lives in it.”

“I don’t care who lives in it. I want to feel you hold me tight and kiss me.”

They turned into the side street and walked toward its blind end.

“Oh, Richard,” she said. “Oh, my dear.”

“I love you.”

“Please love me.”

“I do.”

The wind had blown her hair up and around his neck and he kissed her once more with it beating silkily against both his cheeks.

Then she broke away, suddenly, and hard, and looked at him, and said, “I suppose we had better go to Harry’s.”

“I suppose so. Do you want to play historical personages?”

“Yes,” she said. “Let us play that you are you and I am me.”

“Let’s play,” the Colonel said.

Chapter XXXVII

There was no one in Harry's except some early morning drinkers that the Colonel did not know, and two men that were doing business at the back of the bar.

There were hours at Harry's when it filled with the people that you knew, with the same rushing regularity as the tide coming in at Mont St. Michel. Except, the Colonel thought, the hours of the tides change each day with the moon, and the hours at Harry's are as the Greenwich Meridian, or the standard meter in Paris, or the good opinion the French military hold of themselves.

"Do you know any of these morning drinkers?" he asked the girl.

"No. I am not a morning drinker so I have never met them."

"They will be swept out when the tide comes in."

"No. They will leave, just as it comes, of their own accord."

"Do you mind being here out of season?"

"Did you think I was a snob because I come from an old family? We're the ones who are not snobs. The snobs are what you call jerks, and the people with all the new money. Did you ever see so much new money?"

"Yes," the Colonel said. "I saw it in Kansas City when I used to come in from Ft. Riley to play polo at the Country Club."

"Was it as bad as here?"

"No, it was quite pleasant. I liked it and that part of Kansas City is very beautiful."

"Is it really? I wish that we could go there. Do they have the camps there too? The ones that we are going to stay at?"

"Surely. But we'll stay at the Muehlebach hotel which has the

biggest beds in the world and we'll pretend that we are oil millionaires."

"Where will we leave the Cadillac?"

"Is it a Cadillac now?"

"Yes. Unless you want to take the big Buick Roadmaster, with the Dynaflow drive. I've driven it all over Europe. It was in that last *Vogue* you sent me."

"We'd probably better just use one at a time," the Colonel said. "Whichever one we decide to use we will park in the garage alongside the Muehlebach."

"Is the Muehlebach very splendid?"

"Wonderful. You'll love it. When we leave town we'll drive north to St. Joe and have a drink in the bar at the Roubidoux, maybe two drinks, and then we will cross the river and go west. You can drive, and we can spell each other."

"What is that?"

"Take turns driving."

"I'm driving now."

"Let's skip the dull part and get to Chimney Rock and go on to Scott's Bluff and Torrington and after that you will begin to see it."

"I have the road maps and the guides and that man who says where to eat, and the A.A.A. guide to the camps and the hotels."

"Do you work on this much?"

"I work at it in the evenings, with the things you sent me. What kind of a license will we have?"

"Missouri. We'll buy the car in Kansas City. We fly to Kansas City, don't you remember? Or we can go on a really good train."

"I thought we flew to Albuquerque."

"That was another time."

"Will we stop early in the afternoons at the best Motel in the A.A.A. book and I make you any drinks you want while you read the paper and *Life* and *Time* and *Newsweek,* and I will read the new fresh *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar?*"

“Yes. But we come back here too.”

“Of course. With our car. On an Italian liner; whichever one is best then. We drive straight here from Genova.”

“You don’t want to stop anywhere for the night?”

“Why? We want to get home to our own house.”

“Where will our house be?”

“We can decide that any time. There are always plenty of houses in this town. Would you like to live in the country too?”

“Yes,” the Colonel said. “Why not?”

“Then we could see the trees when we woke up. What sort of trees will we see on this journey?”

“Pine mostly, and cottonwood along the creeks, and aspen. Wait till you see the aspen turn yellow in the fall.”

“I’m waiting. Where will we stay in Wyoming?”

“We’ll go to Sheridan first and then decide.”

“Is Sheridan nice?”

“It’s wonderful. In the car we’ll drive to where they had the WagonBox Fight and I’ll tell you about it. We will drive up, on the way to Billings, to where they killed that fool George Armstrong Custer, and you can see the markers where everybody died and I’ll explain the fight to you.”

“That will be wonderful. Which is Sheridan more like, Mantova or Verona or Vicenza?”

“It isn’t like any of those. It is right up against the mountains, almost like Schio.”

“Is it like Cortina then?”

“Nothing like. Cortina is in a high valley in the mountains. Sheridan lays right up against them. They aren’t any foothills to the Big Horns. They rise high out of the plateau. You can see Cloud’s Peak.”

“Will our cars climb them properly?”

“You’re damn right they will. But I would much rather not have any hydromatic drive.”

“I can do without it,” the girl said. Then she held herself straight and hard not to cry. “As I can do without everything else.”

“What are you drinking?” the Colonel said. “We haven’t even ordered yet.”

“I don’t think I will drink anything.”

“Two very dry Martinis,” the Colonel said to the bartender, “and a glass of cold water.”

He reached into his pocket and unscrewed the top of the medicine bottle, and shook two of the big tablets into his left hand. With them in his hand, he screwed the top back on the bottle. It was no feat for a man with a bad right hand.

“I said I didn’t want to drink anything.”

“I know daughter. But I thought you might need one. We can leave it on the bar. Or I can drink it myself. Please, “ he said. “I did not mean to be brusque.”

“We haven’t asked for the little negro that will look after me.”

“No. Because I did not want to ask for him until Cipriani came in and I could pay for him.”

“Is everything that rigid?”

“With me, I guess,” the Colonel said. “I’m sorry daughter.”

“Say daughter three times straight.”

“Hija, figlia, Daughter.”

“I don’t know,” she said. “I think we should just leave here. I love to have people see us, but I don’t want to see anybody.”

“The box with the negro in it is on top of the cash register.”

“I know. I’ve seen it for sometime.”

The bartender came, with the two drinks, frost cold from the chilled coldness of the glasses, and he brought the glass of water.

“Give me that small packet that came in my name and is on top of the cash register,” the Colonel said to him. “Tell Cipriani I will send him a check for it.”

He had made another decision.

“Do you want your drink, daughter?”

“Yes. If you don’t mind me changing my mind too.”

They drank, after touching the glasses very lightly, so lightly that the contact was almost imperceptible.

“You were right,” she said feeling its warmth and its momentary destruction of sorrow.

“You were right too,” he said and palmed the two tablets.

He thought taking them with the water now was in bad taste. So, when the girl turned her head a moment to watch a morning drinker go out the door, he swallowed them with the Martini.

“Should we go, Daughter?”

“Yes. By all means.”

“Bartender,” the Colonel said. “How much are these drinks? And do not forget to tell Cipriani I am sending him a check for this nonsense.”

Chapter XXXVIII

They ate lunch at the Gritti, and the girl had unwrapped the small ebony negro's head and torso, and pinned it high on her left shoulder. It was about three inches long, and was quite lovely to look at if you liked that sort of thing. And if you don't you are stupid, the Colonel thought.

But do not even think rough, he told himself. You have to be good now in every way until you say good-bye. What a word, he thought, good-bye.

It sounds like a Valentine slogan.

Good-bye and *bonne chance* and *hasta la vista.* We always just said *merde* and let it go at that. Farewell, he thought, that is a nice word. It sings well, he thought. Farewell, a long farewell and take it with you where you go. With handles, he thought.

"Daughter," he said. "How long has it been since I told you that I loved you?"

"Not since we sat at the table."

"I tell you now."

She had combed her hair with patience when they came into the hotel and she had gone into the room for women. She disliked such rooms.

She had used lipstick to make the sort of mouth she knew he most desired, and she had said to herself, making the mouth correctly, "Don't think at all. Don't think. Above all don't be sad because he is going now."

"You look beautiful."

"Thank you. I would like to be beautiful for you if I could and if

I could be beautiful."

"Italian is a lovely language."

"Yes. Mister Dante thought so."

"*Gran Maestro,*" the Colonel said. "What is there to eat in this *Wirtschaft?*"

The *Gran Maestro* had been observing, without observing, with affection and without envy.

"Do you want meat, or fish?"

"It's Saturday," the Colonel said. "Fish is not compulsory. So I'll take it."

"It is sole," the *Gran Maestro* said. "What do you want, my Lady?"

"Whatever you decide. You know more about food than I do, and I like it all."

"Make a decision, Daughter."

"No. I would rather leave it to someone who knows more than me. I have a boarding school appetite."

"It will come as a surprise," the *Gran Maestro* said with his long and loving face with the grey eyebrows over the softly hooded eyes, and the ever happy face of the old soldier who is still alive and appreciates it.

"Is there any news from the Order?" the Colonel asked.

"Only that our leader, Himself, is in trouble. They have confiscated everything he owns. Or at any rate they have intervened. "

"I hope it is not serious."

"We will have confidence in our leader. He has ridden out worse tempests than this."

"To our leader," the Colonel said.

He raised his glass, which had been filled with the decanted new and true Valpolicella. "Drink to him, daughter."

"I can't drink to that swine," the girl said. "Besides I do not belong to the Order."

“You are a member now,” the *Gran Maestro* said. “*Por merito di guerra.*”

“I’ll drink to him then,” she said. “Am I really a member of the Order?”

“Yes,” the *Gran Maestro* said. “You have not received your parchment yet but I appoint you Super Honorary Secretary. My Colonel will reveal to you the secrets of the order. Reveal, please, my Colonel.”

“I reveal,” the Colonel said. “There are no pitted folk about?”

“No. He is out with his Lady. Miss Baedeker.”

“OK then,” the Colonel said. “I will reveal. There is only the major secret that you must know. Correct me, *Gran Maestro,* if I fall into error.”

“Proceed to reveal,” the *Gran Maestro* said.

“I proceed to reveal,” the Colonel said. “Listen carefully daughter. This is the Supreme Secret. Listen. ‘Love is love and fun is fun. But it is always so quiet when the gold fish die.’”

“It has been revealed,” the *Gran Maestro* said.

“I am very proud and happy to be a member of the Order,” the girl said. “But it is, in a way, a rather rough order.”

“It is indeed,” the Colonel said. “And now, *Gran Maestro,* what do we actually eat; without mysteries?”

“Some crab *enchillada,* in the style of this town, but cold, first. Served in the shell. Then sole for you, and for my lady a mixed grill. What vegetables?”

“Whatever you have,” the Colonel said.

The *Gran Maestro* was gone and the Colonel looked at the girl and then at the Grand Canal outside the window, and he saw the magic spots and changes of light that were even here, in the end of the bar, which had now by skillful handling been made into a dining room, and he said, “Did I tell you, daughter, that I love you?”

“You haven’t told me for quite a long time. But I love you.”

"What happens to people that love each other?"

"I suppose they have whatever they have, and they are more fortunate than others. Then one of them gets the emptiness forever."

"I won't be rough," the Colonel said: "I could have made a rough response. But please don't have any emptiness."

"I'll try," the girl said. "I've been trying ever since I woke up. I've tried ever since we knew each other."

"Keep on trying, daughter," the Colonel said.

Then to the *Gran Maestro,* who had reappeared, having given his orders, the Colonel said, "A bottle of that *vino secco,* from Vesuvius, for the small soles. We have the Valpolicella for the other things."

"Can't I drink the Vesuvius wine with my mixed grill?" the girl asked.

"Renata, daughter," the Colonel said. "Of course. You can do anything."

"I like to drink the same wines as you if I drink wine."

"Good white wine is good with a mixed grill, at your age," the Colonel told her.

"I wish there was not such a difference in ages."

"I like it very much," the Colonel said. "Except," he added. Then he did not continue and said, "Let's be *fraîche et rose comme au jour de bataille.*"

"Who said that?"

"I haven't the slightest idea. I picked it up when I took a course at the *Collége des Maréchaux.* A rather pretentious title. But I graduated. What I know best I learned from the Krauts, studying them and opposing them. They are the best soldiers. But they always over-reach."

"Let's be like you said, and please tell me that you love me."

"I love you," he said. "That's what you can base on. I tell you truly."

"It is Saturday," she said. "And when is next Saturday?"

“Next Saturday is a movable feast, daughter. Find me a man who can tell me about next Saturday.”

“You could tell me if you would.”

“I’ll ask the *Gran Maestro,* maybe he knows. *Gran Maestro* when will next Saturday come?”

“*A Pâques ou à la Trinité,*” the *Gran Maestro* said.

“Why don’t we have any smells from the kitchen to cheer us up?”

“Because the wind is from the wrong direction.”

Yes, the Colonel thought. The wind is from the wrong direction and how lucky I would have been to have had this girl instead of the woman that I pay alimony to, who could not even make a child. She hired out for that. But who should criticise whose tubes? I only criticize Goodrich or Firestone or General.

Keep it clean, he said to himself. And love your girl.

She was there beside him, wishing to be loved, if he had any love to give.

It came back, as it always had, when he saw her, and he said, “How are you with the crow wing hair and the breakheart face?”

“I’m fine.”

“*Gran Maestro,*” the Colonel said. “Produce a few smells or something from your offstage kitchen, even if the wind is against us.”

Chapter XXXIX

The hall porter had telephoned, under the direction of the concierge, and it was the same motor boat that they had ridden in before.

T5 Jackson was in the boat with the luggage, and the portrait, which had been well and sturdily wrapped. It was still blowing hard.

The Colonel had paid his bill and made the proper tips. The people of the hotel had put the luggage and the picture in the boat, and seen that Jackson was seated properly. Then they had retired.

"Well, daughter," the Colonel said.

"Can't I ride with you to the garage?"

"It would be just as bad at the garage."

"Please let me ride to the garage."

"All right," the Colonel said. "It's your show, really. Get in."

They did not talk at all, and the wind was a stern wind so that, with what speed the old calamity of a motor made, there seemed almost to be no wind at all.

At the landing place, where Jackson was handing the luggage to a porter, and looking after the portrait himself, the Colonel said, "Do you want to say good-bye here?"

"Do I have to?"

"No."

"May I come up to the bar in the garage while they are getting the car down?"

"That will be worse."

"I do not care."

“Get that stuff up to the garage, and have somebody look after it until you get the car down,” the Colonel said to Jackson. “Check on my guns and pack this stuff in a way to give the maximum space in the rear seat.”

“Yes, sir,” Jackson said.

“Am I going then?” the girl asked.

“No,” the Colonel told her.

“Why can’t I go?”

“You know very well. You weren’t invited.”

“Please don’t be bad.”

“Christ, Daughter, if you knew how hard I am trying not to be. It’s easy if you’re bad. Let’s pay this good man off, and go over and sit on the bench there under the tree.”

He paid the owner of the motor boat, and told him that he had not forgotten about the jeep engine. He also told him not to count on it, but that there was a good chance that he could get it.

“It will be a used engine. But it will be better than that coffee pot you have in there now.”

They went up the worn stone steps and walked across the gravel and sat on a bench under the trees.

The trees were black and moved in the wind, and there were no leaves on them. The leaves had fallen early, that year, and been swept up long ago.

A man came over to offer postcards for sale and the Colonel told him, “Run along, son. We don’t need you now.”

The girl was crying, finally, although she had made the decision never to cry.

“Look, Daughter,” the Colonel said. “There isn’t anything to say. They didn’t install shock absorbers in this vehicle we ride in now.”

“I’ve stopped,” she said. “I’m not an hysterical.”

“I wouldn’t say you were. I’d say you were the loveliest and most beautiful girl that ever lived. Any time. Any place. Anywhere.”

“If it were true, what difference would it make?”

“You have me there,” the Colonel said. “But it is true.”

“So now what?”

“So now we stand up and kiss each other and say good-bye.”

“What’s that?”

“I don’t know,” the Colonel said. “I guess that is one of the things everybody has to figure out for themselves.”

“I’ll try to figure it.”

“Just take it as easy as you can, Daughter.”

“Yes,” the girl said. “In the vehicle without the shock absorbers.”

“You were tumbril bait from the start.”

“Can’t you do anything kindly?”

“I guess not. But I’ve tried”

“Please keep on trying. That’s all the hope we have.”

“I’ll keep on trying.”

So they held each other close and kissed each other hard and true, and the Colonel took the girl across the stretch of gravel and down the stone steps.

“You ought to take a good one. Not that old displaced engine boat.”

“I’d rather take the displaced engine boat if you don’t mind.”

“Mind?” the Colonel said. “Not me. I only give orders and obey orders. I don’t mind. Good-bye, my dear, lovely, beautiful.”

“Good-bye,” she said.

Chapter XL

He was in the sunken oak hogshead that they used in the Veneto for blinds. A blind is any artifice you use to hide the shooter from that which he is attempting to shoot, which, in this case, were ducks.

It had been a good trip out with the boys, once they had met in the garage, and a good evening with excellent food cooked on the old open-hearth kitchen. Three shooters rode in the rear seat, on the way to the shooting place. Those who did not lie had permitted themselves a certain amount of exaggeration and the liars had never been in fuller flower.

A liar, in full flower, the Colonel had thought, is as beautiful as cherry trees, or apple trees when they are in blossom. Who should ever discourage a liar, he thought, unless he is giving you co-ordinates?

The Colonel had collected liars all his life, as some men gather postage stamps. He did not classify them, except at the moment, nor treasure them truly. He just enjoyed, completely, hearing them lie at the moment, unless, of course, something concerned with duty was involved. Last night there had been a fair amount of good lying after the grappa had been passed around, and the Colonel had enjoyed it.

There had been smoke in the room from the open charcoal fire; no, there were logs, he thought. Anyway a liar lies best when there is a little smoke or when the sun has set.

He had come close to lying twice himself, and had held it up, and merely exaggerated. I hope anyway, he thought.

Now here was the frozen lagoon to ruin everything. But it was

not ruined.

A pair of pintails came, suddenly, from nowhere, slanting down fast in a dive no airplane ever made, and the Colonel heard their feathered trajectory and swung and killed the drake. He lay on the ice, hitting it as solid as a duck can hit ice, and, before he was down, the Colonel had killed his mate, who was climbing, long-necked and fast.

She fell alongside the drake.

So it is murder, the Colonel thought. And what isn't nowadays? But, boy, you can still shoot.

Boy, hell, he thought. You beat-up old bastard. But look at them come now.

They were widgeon, and they came in a whisp that coagulated and then stretched to nothing. Then they coagulated again and the treacherous duck on the ice started to talk to them.

Let them turn once more, the Colonel said to himself. Keep your head down, and do not move even your eyes. They are going to come in.

They came in well, with treachery speaking to them.

Their wings were suddenly set to alight, as when you lower the flaps. Then they saw it was ice and they rose, climbing.

The shooter, who was not a Colonel now, nor anything but a gun handler, rose in the wooden barrel and got two. They hit the ice almost as solidly as the big ducks.

Two is enough from one family, the Colonel said. Or was it one tribe?

The Colonel heard a shot behind him, where he knew there was no other blind, and turned his head to look across the frozen lagoon to the far, sedge-lined shore.

That does it, he thought.

A bunch of mallards, that had been coming in low, were flaring up into the sky, seeming to stand on their tails as they climbed.

He saw one fall, then heard another shot.

It was the sullen boatman shooting at the ducks that would have come to the Colonel.

How, how can he do that? the Colonel thought.

The man had a shotgun to shoot any cripples that might be escaping where the dog could not get them. For him to fire at ducks that were coming to the Colonel's blind was, in shooting, as bad a thing as one man could do to another.

The boatman was too far away to hear a shout. So the Colonel fired at him twice.

It is too far for the pellets to reach, he thought, but at least he will know that I know what he is doing. What the hell is this all about? On a beautifully run shoot like this one too? This is the best organized and best run duck shoot I have ever shot at and I have had as much fun shooting here as I ever had in my life. What is the matter with that son of a bitch?

He knew how bad his anger was for him. So he took two of the pills and washed them down with a drink of Gordon's gin from his flask since there was no water.

He knew the gin was bad for him too and he thought, everything is bad for me except rest and very light exercise. OK, rest and light exercise, boy. Do you suppose that is light exercise?

You, beauty, he said to himself. I wish you were here now and we were in the double blind and if we could only just feel the backs of our shoulders touch. I'd look around and see you and I would shoot the high ducks well, to show off and try to put one in the blind without having it hit you. I'd try to pull one down like this, he said, hearing the wings in the air. He rose, turned, saw the single drake, long necked and beautiful, the wings fast moving and travelling to the sea. He saw him sharp and clear and in the sky with the mountains behind him. He met him, covered him and pulled as he swung as far back as he could swing the gun.

The drake came down on the ice, just outside the perimeter of the blind, and broke the ice as he fell. It was the ice that had been

broken to put out the decoys and it had re-frozen lightly. The calling hen looked at him as he lay and shifted her feet.

"You never saw him before in your life," the Colonel said to the hen. "I don't believe you even saw him coming. Though you may have. But you didn't say anything."

The drake had hit with his head down and his head was under the ice. But the Colonel could see the beautiful winter plumage on his breast and wings.

I'd like to give her a vest made of the whole plumage the way the old Mexicans used to ornament their gods, he thought. But I suppose these ducks have to go to the market and no one would know how to skin and cure the skins anyway. It could be beautiful, though, with Mallard drake skins for the back and sprig for the front with two longitudinal stripes of teal. One coming down over each breast. Be a hell of a vest. I'm pretty sure she'd like it.

I wish that they would fly, the Colonel thought. A few fool ducks might come in. I have to stay ready for them if they do. But none came in and he had to think.

There were no shots from the other blinds and only occasional shots from the sea.

With the good light, the birds could see the ice and they no longer came in and instead went out to the open sea to raft up. So he had no shooting and he thought without intention, trying to find what had made it at the first. He knew he did not deserve it and he accepted it and he lived by it, but he sought, always, to understand it.

One time it had been two sailors when he had been walking with the girl at night. They had whistled at her and, the Colonel thought, that was a harmless enough thing and he should have let it go.

But there was something wrong with it. He sensed it before he knew it. Then he knew it solidly, because he had stopped under a light, in order that they might see what he wore on his shoulders, so

that they might take the other side of the street.

What he wore on each shoulder was a small eagle with wings out-stretched. It was embroidered onto the coat he wore in silver thread. It was not conspicuous, and it had been there a long time. But it was visible.

The two sailors whistled again.

"Stay over there against the wall if you want to watch it," the Colonel had said to the girl. "Or look away."

"They are very big and young."

"They won't be big for long," the Colonel promised her.

The Colonel walked over to the whistlers.

"Where is your shore patrol?" he asked.

"How would I know?" the biggest whistler said. "All I want is a good look at the dame."

"Do people like you have names and serial numbers?"

"How would I know," one said.

The other said, "I wouldn't tell a chicken Colonel if I had."

Old army boy, the Colonel thought, before he hit him. Sea lawyer. Knows all his rights.

But he hit him with a left from nowhere and hit him three times as he started to go.

The other one, the first whistler, had closed fast and well, for a man who had been drinking, and the Colonel gave him the elbow in the mouth and then, under the light, had a good right hand shot at him. When it was in, he glanced at the second whistler and saw that was okay.

Then he threw a left hook. Then he put the right way into the body, coming up. He threw another left hook and then turned away and walked toward the girl because he did not want to hear the head hit the pavement.

He checked on the one that had it first, and noted he slept peacefully, chin down, with the blood coming out of his mouth. But it was still the right color, the Colonel noted.

“Well, there goes my career,” he said to the girl. “Whatever that was. But those people certainly wear funny pants.”

“How are you?” the girl asked.

“I’m fine. Did you watch it?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll have bad hands in the morning,” he said absent-mindedly. “But I think we can walk away from it all right. But let’s walk slowly.”

“Please walk slowly.”

“I did not mean it that way. I meant let’s not be hurried in our departure.”

“We will walk as slowly as two people can walk.”

So they walked.

“Do you want to try an experiment?”

“Of course.”

“Let’s walk so we make even the backs of our legs look dangerous. “

“I’ll try. But I don’t think I can.”

“Well, let’s just walk then.”

“But didn’t they hit you?”

“One pretty good right behind the ear. The second boy when he came in.”

“Is that what fighting’s like?”

“When you’re lucky.”

“And when you’re not lucky?”

“Your knees bend too. Either forward or backward.”

“Do you still care for me after you have fought?”

“I love you much more than before if it were possible.”

“Can’t it be possible? It would be nice. I love you more since I saw that thing. Am I walking slowly enough?”

“You walk like a deer in the forest, and sometimes you walk as well as a wolf, or an old, big coyote when he is not hurried.”

“I’m not sure I wish to be an old big coyote.”

“Wait till you see one,” the Colonel said. “You’ll wish. You walk like all the great predators, when they walk softly. And you are not a predator.”

“That I can promise.”

“Walk a little ahead so I can see.”

She walked ahead and the Colonel said, “You walk like a champion before he is the champion. If you were a horse I would buy you if I had to borrow the money at twenty percent a month.”

“You don’t have to buy me.”

“I know about that. That was not what we were discussing. We were discussing your gait.”

“Tell me,” she said. “What happens to those men? That’s one of the things I don’t know about fighting. Shouldn’t I have stayed and cared for them?”

“Never,” the Colonel told her. “Remember that; never. I hope they split a good concussion between them. They can rot. They caused the accident. There is no question of civil responsibility. We were all insured. If I can tell you one thing, Renata, about fighting.”

“Tell me please.”

“If you ever fight, then you must win it. That’s all that counts. All the rest is cabbage, as my old friend Dr. Rommel put it.”

“Did you really like Rommel?”

“Very much.”

“But he was your enemy.”

“I love my enemies, sometimes, more than my friends. And the Navy, you know, wins all their fights always. This I learned in a place called the Pentagon building when I was still permitted to enter that building by the front door. If you like we can stroll back down this street, or walk it fast, and ask those two that question.”

“I tell you truly, Richard. I have seen enough fighting for one night.”

“Me too, to tell the truth,” the Colonel said. But he said it in Italian and it started, “*Anche io.* Let’s go to Harry’s for one, and then

I will walk you home."

"Didn't you hurt your bad hand?"

"No," he explained. "I only threw it once to the head. The other times I punched to the body with it."

"May I feel it?"

"If you will feel very softly."

"But it is terribly swollen."

"There is nothing broken in it and that sort of swelling always goes down."

"Do you love me?"

"Yes. I love you with two moderately swollen hands and. all my heart."

Chapter XLI

So that was that, and maybe it was that day or maybe it was another that made the miracle. You never knew, he thought. There was the great miracle and he had never consciously implemented it. Nor, he thought, you son of a bitch, did you ever oppose it.

It was colder than ever and the broken ice re-froze and the calling duck did not even look up now. She had abandoned treachery for an attempt at security.

You bitch, the Colonel thought. Though that is unjust. It is your trade. But why is it a hen calls better than a drake. You ought to know, he thought. And even that's not true. What the hell is true? Drakes actually call better.

Now don't think of her. Don't think of Renata because it won't do you any good, boy. It might even be bad for you. Also you said good-bye. What a good-bye that was. Complete with tumbrils. And she would have climbed up in the damned tumbril with you too. Just so long as it was a real tumbril. Very rough trade, he thought. Loving and leaving. People can get hurt at it.

Who gave you a right to know a girl like that?

Nobody, he answered. But Andrea introduced me to her.

But how could she love a sad son of a bitch like you?

I do not know, he thought truly. I truly do not know.

He did not know, among other things, that the girl loved him because he had never been sad one waking morning of his life; attack or no attack. He had experienced anguish and sorrow. But he had never been sad in the morning.

They make almost none like that, and the girl, although she was

a young girl, knew one when she saw one.

Now she is at home and sleeping, the Colonel thought. That is where she ought to be and not in any god damn duck blind with the decoys frozen up on us.

I wish to hell she was here though, if this were a double blind, and have her looking to the west just in case one string did come in. It would be nice if she were warm enough. Maybe I can trade somebody out of one of these real down jackets that nobody ever sold that had one. The kind they issued to the Air Force once by mistake.

I could find out how they are quilted and make one with duck down from here, he thought. I'd get a good tailor to cut it and we would make it double-breasted with no pocket on the right and lay in a chamois shooting patch so the gun butt would never catch.

I'll do it, he said to himself. I'll do it, or I will get one off some joker and have it cut down for her. I'd like to get her a good Purdey 12, not too damn light, or a pair of Boss over and unders. She should have guns as good as she is. I suppose a pair of Purdey's, he thought.

Just then he heard the light swish of pinions, fast beating in the air, and looked up. But they were too high. He only looked up with his eyes. But they were so high they could see the barrel, and him in it, and the frozen-in decoys with the dejected hen, who saw them too, and quacked hard in her loyal treachery. The ducks, they were pintails, continued on their flight out toward the sea.

I never give her anything, as she pointed out. There was the small moor's head. But it does not mean anything. She selected it and I bought it. That is no way to give a gift.

What I would like to give her is security, which does not exist anymore; all my love, which is worthless; all my worldly goods, which are practically non-existent except for two good shotguns, my soldier suits, the medals and decorations with the citations, and some books. Also a retired Colonel's pay.

With all my worldly goods I thee endow, he thought.

And she gave me her love, some hard stones, which I returned, and the picture. Well, I can always give her back the picture. I could give her my ring from V.M.I., he thought, but where the hell did I lose that?

She wouldn't want a D.S.C. with cluster, nor two silver stars, nor the other junk, nor the medals of her own country. Nor those of France. Nor those of Belgium. Nor the trick ones. That would be morbid.

I better just give her my love. But how the hell do you send it? And how do you keep it fresh? They can't pack it in dry ice.

Maybe they can. I must inquire. But how do I get that condemned jeep engine to that old man?

Figure it out, he thought. Figuring things out has been your trade. Figuring things out when they were shooting at you, he added.

I wish that son of a bitch that is lousing up the duck shooting had a rifle and I had a rifle. We would find out pretty soon who could figure things out. Even in a lousy barrel in a marsh where you can't maneuver. He'd have to come to get me.

Stop that, he said to himself, and think about your girl. You do not want to kill anyone anymore; ever.

Who are you feeding that to, he told himself. You going to run as a Christian? You might give it an honest try. She would like you better that way. Or would she? I don't know, he said frankly. I honest to Christ don't know.

Maybe I will get Christian toward the end. Yes, he said, maybe you will. Who wants to make a bet on that?

"You want to bet on that?" he asked the calling duck. But she was looking up at the sky behind him and had commenced her small chuckling talk.

They came over too high and never circled. They only looked down and went on toward the open sea.

They must really be rafted up out there, the Colonel thought. There's probably some punt gunner trying to sneak up on them now. They will be pretty close into the lee with the wind and someone is sneaking onto them now surely. Well, when he makes his shot some may break back this way. But with it frozen-up I suppose I really ought to pull out instead of staying here like a fool.

I have killed enough and I have shot as well or better than I can shoot. Better hell, he thought. Nobody shoots better than you here except Alvarito and he's a kid and shoots faster. But you kill fewer ducks than many bad and fair shots.

Yes, I know about that. I know about that and why and we don't go by the numbers anymore and we threw away the book too, remember?

He remembered how, by some miracle of chance in a war, he had been with his best friend for a moment in action in the Ardennes and they were pursuing.

It was early fall and it was on a high upland with sandy roads and trails and the trees were scrub oak and pines. The enemy tank and half track prints showed clearly in the moist sand.

It had rained the day before, but now it was clearing and visibility was good and you could see well across all the high, rolling country and he and his friend were glass-ing it as carefully as though they were hunting game.

The Colonel, who was a General then, and an assistant divisional commander, knew the individual print of each tracked vehicle they were pursuing. He also knew when the enemy vehicles had run out of mines and approximately the number of rounds that remained to them. He also had figured where they had to fight before they reached the Siegfried. He was sure they would not fight at either of these two places but would race for where they were going.

"We're pretty far up for people of our exalted rank, George," he said to his best friend.

"Ahead of the point, General."

“It’s okay,” the Colonel had said. “Now we throwaway the book and chase for keeps.”

“I couldn’t agree more fully, General. Because I wrote the book myself,” his best friend said. “But suppose they had left something there?”

He pointed to the logical place to defend.

“They didn’t leave anything there,” the Colonel had said. “They haven’t enough stuff left even for a chickenshit fire-fight.”

“Everybody’s right until he’s wrong,” his best friend said, adding, “General.”

“I’m right,” the Colonel said. He was right, too, although in obtaining his exact knowledge he had not fulfilled the complete spirit of the Geneva Convention which was alleged to govern the operation of war.

“Let’s really chase,” his best friend had said.

“There’s nothing holding us up and I guarantee they won’t stop at either of those two. I didn’t get that from any kraut either. That’s from my head.”

He looked over the country once more, and heard the wind in the trees and smelled the heather under their boots and looked once more at the tracks in the wet sand and that was the end of that story.

I wonder if she’d like that? he thought. No. It builds me up too much. I’d like to get somebody else to tell it to her though and build me solid. George can’t tell it to her. He’s the only one that could tell it to her and he can’t. He sure as hell can’t.

I’ve been right over ninety-five percent of the time and that’s a hell of a batting average even in something as simple as war. But that five percent when you are wrong can certainly be something.

I’ll never tell you about that, Daughter. That’s just a noise heard off stage in my heart. My lousy chicken heart. That bastard heart certainly couldn’t hold the pace.

Maybe he will, he thought, and took two of the tablets and a

swallow of gin and looked across the gray ice.

I'm going to get that sullen character in now and pick up and get the hell to the farm house or the lodge, I suppose that I should call it. The shooting's over.

Chapter XLII

The Colonel had signalled the boatman in by standing up, in the sunken barrel, firing two shots toward the empty sky, and then waving him toward the blind.

The boat came in slowly, breaking ice all the way, and the man picked up the wooden decoys, caught the calling hen and put her in her sack, and, with the dog slithering on the ice, picked up the ducks. The boatman's anger seemed to be gone and to be replaced by a solid satisfaction.

"You shot very few," he said to the Colonel.

"With your help."

That was all they said and the boatman placed the ducks carefully, breasts up, on the bow of the boat and the Colonel handed his guns and the combination cartridge box and shooting stool into the boat.

The Colonel got into the boat and the boatman checked the blind and unhooked the pocketed, apron-like device which had hung on the inside of the blind to hold shells. Then he got into the boat too and they commenced their slow and laborious progress out through the ice to the open water of the brown canal. The Colonel worked as hard with the poling oar as he had worked coming in. But now, in the bright sunlight, with the snow mountains to the north, and the line of the sedge that marked the canal ahead of them, they worked together in complete co-ordination.

Then they were into the canal, slipping breakingly in from the last ice; then, suddenly, light borne and the Colonel handed the big oar to the boatman and sat down. He was sweating.

The dog, who had been shivering at the Colonel's feet, pawed his way over the gunwale of the boat and swam to the canal bank. Shaking the water from his white be-draggled coat, he was into the brown sedge and brush, and the Colonel watched his progress toward home by the movement of the brush. He had never received his sausage.

The Colonel, feeling himself sweating, although he knew he was protected from the wind by his field jacket, took two tablets from the bottle and a sip of gin from his flask.

The flask was flat and of silver with a leather cover. Under the leather cover, which was worn and stained, it was engraved, on one side, to Richard From Renata With Love. No one had ever seen this inscription except the girl, the Colonel, and the man who had engraved it. It had not been engraved in the same place it was purchased. That was in the earliest days, the Colonel thought. Now who cared?

On the screw-on top of the flask was engraved From R. to R.C.

The Colonel offered the flask to the boatman who looked at him, at the flask, and said, "What is it?"

"English grappa."

"I'll try it."

He took a long drink of it; the type of drink peasants take from a flask.

"Thank you."

"Did you have good shooting?"

"I killed four ducks. The dog found three cripples shot by other people."

"Why did you shoot?"

"I'm sorry that I shot. I shot in anger."

I have done that myself sometimes, the Colonel thought, and did not ask him what the anger was about.

"I am sorry they did not fly better."

"Shit," the Colonel said. "That's the way things go."

The Colonel was watching the movement the dog made in the high grass and sedge. Suddenly he saw him stop; he was quite still. Then he pounced. It was a high leap and a dive forward and down.

"He has a cripple," he said to the boatman.

"Bobby," the boatman called. "Bring. Bring."

The sedge moved and the dog came out with a mallard drake in his jaws. The gray white neck and the green head were swaying up and down as a snake's might move. It was a movement without hope.

The boatman put the boat in sharp for shore.

"I'll take him," the Colonel said. "Bobby!"

He took the duck from the dog's light-holding mouth and felt him intact and sound and beautiful to hold, and with his heart beating and his captured, hopeless eyes.

He looked at him carefully, gentling him as you might gentle a horse.

"He's only wing-tipped," he said. "We'll keep him for a caller or to turn loose in the Spring. Here, take him and put him in the sack with the hen."

The boatman took him carefully and put him in the burlap bag that was under the bow. The Colonel heard the hen speak to him. Or, maybe she is protesting, he thought. He could not understand duck-talk through a burlap bag.

"Take a shot of this," he said to the boatman. "It's damned cold today."

The boatman took the flask and drank deeply again.

"Thank you," he said. "Your grappa is very, very good."

Chapter XLIII

At the landing, before the long low stone house by the side of the canal, there were ducks laid out on the ground in rows.

They were laid in groups that were never of the same number. There were a few platoons, no companies, and, the Colonel thought, I barely have a squad.

The head gamekeeper was standing on the bank in his high boots, his short jacket and his pushed back old felt hat, and he looked critically at the number of ducks on the bow of the boat as they came alongshore.

"It was frozen-up at our post," the Colonel said.

"I suspected so," the head keeper said. "I'm sorry. It was supposed to be the best post."

"Who was top gun?"

"The Barone killed forty-two. There was a little current there that kept it open for a while. You probably did not hear the shooting because it was against the wind."

"Where is everyone?"

"They're all gone except the Barone who is waiting for you. Your driver is asleep in the house."

"He would be," the Colonel said.

"Spread those out properly," the head keeper told the boatman who was a game-keeper too. "I want to put them in the game book."

"There is one green-head drake in the bag who is only wing-tipped."

"Good. I will take good care of him."

“I will go inside and see the Barone. I’ll see you later.”

“You must get warm,” the head keeper said. “It’s been a bitter day, my Colonel.”

The Colonel started to walk toward the door of the house.

“I’ll see you later,” he said to the boatman.

“Yes, my Colonel,” the boatman said.

Alvarito, the Barone, was standing by the open fire in the middle of the room. He smiled his shy smile and said in his low pitched voice, “I am sorry you did not have better shooting.”

“We froze up completely. I enjoyed what there was very much.”

“Are you very cold?”

“Not too cold.”

“We can have something to eat.”

“Thank you. I’m not hungry. Have you eaten?”

“Yes. The others went on and I let them take my car. Can you give me a lift to Latisana or just above? I can get transportation from there.”

“Of course.”

“It was a shame that it should freeze. The prospects were so good.”

“There must have been a world of ducks outside.”

“Yes. But now they won’t stay with their feed frozen over. They will be on their way south tonight.”

“Will they all go?”

“All except our local ducks that breed here. They’ll stay as long as there is any open water.”

“I’m sorry for the shoot.”

“I’m sorry you came so far for so few ducks.”

“I always love the shoot,” the Colonel said. “And I love Venice.”

The Barone Alvarito looked away and spread his hands toward the fire. “Yes,” he said. “We all love Venice. Perhaps you do the best of all.”

The Colonel made no small talk on this but said, “I love Venice

as you know."

"Yes. I know," the Barone said. He looked at nothing. Then he said, "We must wake your driver."

"Has he eaten?"

"Eaten and slept and eaten and slept. He has also read a little in some illustrated books he brought with him."

"Comic books," the Colonel said.

"I should learn to read them," the Barone said. He smiled the shy, dark smile. "Could you get me some from Trieste?"

"Any amount," the Colonel told him. "From superman on up into the improbable. Read some for me. Look, Alvarito, what was the matter with that gamekeeper who poled my boat? He seemed to have a hatred for me at the start. Pretty well through, too."

"It was the old battle jacket. Allied uniform affects him that way. You see he was a bit over-liberated."

"Go on."

"When the Moroccans came through here they raped both his wife and his daughter."

"I think I'd better have a drink," the Colonel said.

"There is grappa there on the table."

Chapter XLIV

They had dropped the Barone off at a villa with great gates, a gravelled drive and a house, which, since it was over six miles from any military objective, had the good fortune not to have been bombed.

The Colonel had said good-bye and Alvarito had told him to come down and shoot any, or every, weekend.

"You're sure you won't come in?"

"No. I must get back to Trieste. Will you give my love to Renata?"

"I will. Is that her portrait that you have wrapped in the back of the car?"

"It is."

"I'll tell her that you shot very well and that the portrait was in good condition."

"Also my love."

"Also your love."

"*Ciao,* Alvarito, and thank you very much."

"*Ciao,* my Colonel. If one can say *ciao* to a Colonel."

"Consider me not a Colonel."

"It is very difficult. Good-bye, my Colonel."

"In case of any unforeseen contingencies would you ask her to have the portrait picked up at the Gritti?"

"Yes, my Colonel."

"That's all, I guess."

"Good-bye, my Colonel."

Chapter XLV

They were out on the road now and the early darkness was beginning.

"Turn left," the Colonel said.

"That's not the road for Trieste, sir," Jackson said.

"The hell with the road to Trieste. I ordered you to turn left. Do you think there is only one way in the world to get to Trieste? "

"No, sir. I was only pointing out to the Colonel—"

"Don't you point me out a goddamn thing and until I direct you otherwise, don't speak to me until you are spoken to."

"Yes, sir."

"I'm sorry, Jackson. What I mean is I know where I'm going and I want to think."

"Yes, sir."

They were on the old road that he knew so well and the Colonel thought, well, I sent four of the ducks I promised to those I promised them to at the Gritti. There wasn't enough shooting to be enough feathers to do that boy's wife any good with feathers. But they are all big ducks and fat and they will be good eating. I forgot to give Bobby the sausage.

There was no time to write Renata a note. But what could I say, in a note, that we did not say?

He reached into his pocket and found a pad and pencil. He put on the map reading light, and with his bad hand, printed a short message in block letters.

"Put that in your pocket, Jackson, and act on it if necessary. If the circumstances described occur, it is an order."

“Yes, sir,” Jackson said and took the folded order blank with one hand and put it in the top left hand pocket of his tunic.

Now take it easy, the Colonel said to himself. Any further concern you may have is about yourself and that is just a luxury.

You are no longer of any real use to the Army of the United States. That has been made quite clear.

You have said good-bye to your girl and she has said good-bye to you.

That is certainly simple.

You shot well and Alvarito understands. That is that.

So what the hell do you have to worry about, boy? I hope you’re not the type of jerk who worries about what happens to him when there’s nothing to be done. Let’s certainly hope not.

Just then it hit him as he had known it would since they had picked up the decoys.

Three strikes is out, he thought, and they gave me four.

I’ve always been a lucky son of a bitch.

It hit him again, badly.

“Jackson,” he said. “Do you know what General Thomas J. Jackson said on one occasion? On the occasion of his unfortunate death. I memorized it once. I can’t respond for its accuracy of course. But this is how it was reported: ‘Order A. P. Hill to prepare for action.’ Then some more delirious crap. Then he said, ‘No, no, let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees.’ “

“That’s very interesting, sir,” Jackson said. “That must have been Stonewall Jackson, sir.”

The Colonel started to speak but he stopped while it hit him the third time and gripped him so he knew he could not live.

“Jackson,” the Colonel said. “Pull up at the side of the road and cut to your parking lights. Do you know the way to Trieste from here?”

“Yes, sir, I have my map.”

“Good. I’m now going to get into the large back seat of this

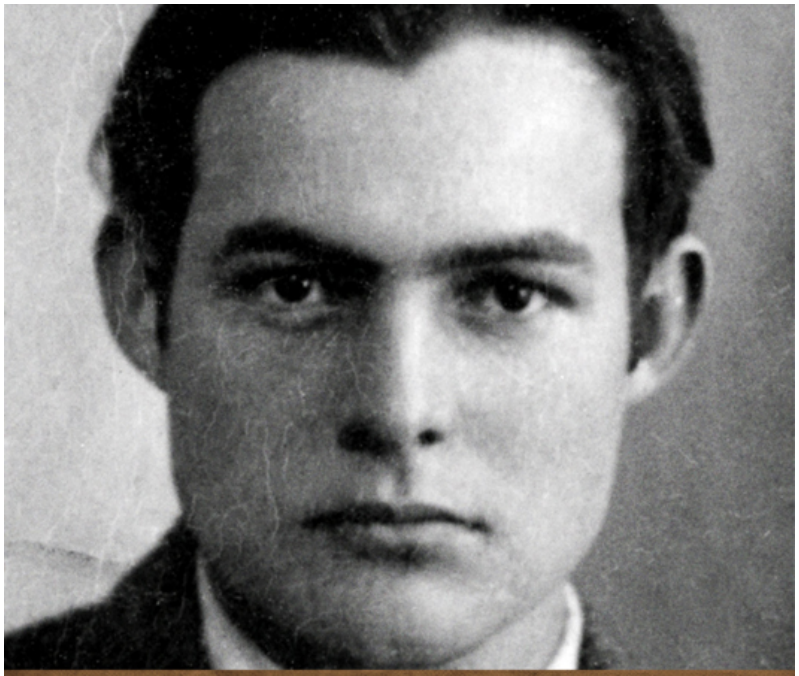
goddamned, over-sized luxurious automobile."

That was the last thing the Colonel ever said. But he made the back seat all right and he shut the door. He shut it carefully and well.

After a while Jackson drove the car down the ditch and willow lined road with the car's big lights on, looking for a place to turn. He found one, finally, and turned carefully. When he was on the right hand side of the road, facing south toward the road juncture that would put him on the highway that led to Trieste, the one he was familiar with, he put his map light on and took out the order blank and read:

> *In the event of my death the wrapped painting and the two shotguns in this car will be returned to the Hotel Gritti Venice where they will be claimed by their rightful owner signed Richard Cantwell, Col., Infantry, U.S.A.*

"They'll return them all right, through channels," Jackson thought, and put the car in gear.



ERNEST HEMINGWAY

The Old Man and the Sea

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

The Old Man and the Sea

Ernest Hemingway

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

CONTENTS

Dedication

The Old Man and the Sea

Dedication

To Charlie Scribner
And
To Max Perkins

The Old Man and the Sea

He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish. In the first forty days a boy had been with him. But after forty days without a fish the boy's parents had told him that the old man was now definitely and finally *salao,* which is the worst form of unlucky, and the boy had gone at their orders in another boat which caught three good fish the first week. It made the boy sad to see the old man come in each day with his skiff empty and he always went down to help him carry either the coiled lines or the gaff and harpoon and the sail that was furled around the mast. The sail was patched with flour sacks and, furled, it looked like the flag of permanent defeat.

The old man was thin and gaunt with deep wrinkles in the back of his neck. The brown blotches of the benevolent skin cancer the sun brings from its reflection on the tropic sea were on his cheeks. The blotches ran well down the sides of his face and his hands had the deep-creased scars from handling heavy fish on the cords. But none of these scars were fresh. They were as old as erosions in a fishless desert.

Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated.

"Santiago," the boy said to him as they climbed the bank from where the skiff was hauled up. "I could go with you again. We've made some money."

The old man had taught the boy to fish and the boy loved him.

"No," the old man said. "You're with a lucky boat. Stay with

them."

"But remember how you went eighty-seven days without fish and then we caught big ones every day for three weeks."

"I remember," the old man said. "I know you did not leave me because you doubted."

"It was papa made me leave. I am a boy and I must obey him."

"I know," the old man said. "It is quite normal." "He hasn't much faith."

"No," the old man said. "But we have. Haven't we."

"Yes," the boy said. "Can I offer you a beer on the Terrace and then we'll take the stuff home."

"Why not?" the old man said. "Between fishermen."

They sat on the Terrace and many of the fishermen made fun of the old man and he was not angry. Others, of the older fishermen, looked at him and were sad. But they did not show it and they spoke politely about the current and the depths they had drifted their lines at and the steady good weather and of what they had seen. The successful fishermen of that day were already in and had butchered their marlin out and carried them laid full length across two planks, with two men staggering at the end of each plank, to the fish house where they waited for the ice truck to carry them to the market in Havana. Those who had caught sharks had taken them to the shark factory on the other side of the cove where they were hoisted on a block and tackle, their livers removed, their fins cut off and their hides skinned out and their flesh cut into strips for salting.

When the wind was in the east a smell came across the harbour from the shark factory; but today there was only the faint edge of the odour because the wind had backed into the north and then dropped off and it was pleasant and sunny on the Terrace.

"Santiago," the boy said.

"Yes," the old man said. He was holding his glass and thinking of many years ago.

“Can I go out to get sardines for you for tomorrow?”

“No. Go and play baseball. I can still row and Rogelio will throw the net.”

“I would like to go. If I cannot fish with you, I would like to serve in some way.”

“You bought me a beer,” the old man said. “You are already a man.”

“How old was I when you first took me in a boat?”

“Five and you nearly were killed when I brought the fish in too green and he nearly tore the boat to pieces. Can you remember?”

“I can remember the tail slapping and banging and the thwart breaking and the noise of the clubbing. I can remember you throwing me into the bow where the wet coiled lines were and feeling the whole boat shiver and the noise of you clubbing him like chopping a tree down and the sweet blood smell all over me.”

“Can you really remember that or did I just tell it to you?”

“I remember everything from when we first went together.”

The old man looked at him with his sun-burned, confident loving eyes.

“If you were my boy I’d take you out and gamble,” he said. “But you are your father’s and your mother’s and you are in a lucky boat.”

“May I get the sardines? I know where I can get four baits too.”

“I have mine left from today. I put them in salt in the box.”

“Let me get four fresh ones.”

“One,” the old man said. His hope and his confidence had never gone. But now they were freshening as when the breeze rises.

“Two,” the boy said.

“Two,” the old man agreed. “You didn’t steal them?”

“I would,” the boy said. “But I bought these.”

“Thank you,” the old man said. He was too simple to wonder when he had attained humility. But he knew he had attained it and he knew it was not disgraceful and it carried no loss of true pride.

“Tomorrow is going to be a good day with this current,” he said.

“Where are you going?” the boy asked.

“Far out to come in when the wind shifts. I want to be out before it is light.”

“I’ll try to get him to work far out,” the boy said. “Then if you hook something truly big we can come to your aid.”

“He does not like to work too far out.”

“No,” the boy said. “But I will see something that he cannot see such as a bird working and get him to come out after dolphin.”

“Are his eyes that bad?”

“He is almost blind.”

“It is strange,” the old man said. “He never went turtle-ing. That is what kills the eyes.”

“But you went turtle-ing for years off the Mosquito Coast and your eyes are good.”

“I am a strange old man.”

“But are you strong enough now for a truly big fish?”

“I think so. And there are many tricks.”

“Let us take the stuff home,” the boy said. “So I can get the cast net and go after the sardines.”

They picked up the gear from the boat. The old man carried the mast on his shoulder and the boy carried the wooden box; with the coiled, hard-braided brown lines, the gaff and the harpoon with its shaft. The box with the baits was under the stern of the skiff along with the club that was used to subdue the big fish when they were brought alongside. No one would steal from the old man but it was better to take the sail and the heavy lines home as the dew was bad for them and, though he was quite sure no local people would steal from him, the old man thought that a gaff and a harpoon were needless temptations to leave in a boat.

They walked up the road together to the old man’s shack and went in through its open door. The old man leaned the mast with its wrapped sail against the wall and the boy put the box and the other

gear beside it. The mast was nearly as long as the one room of the shack. The shack was made of the tough budshields of the royal palm which are called *guano* and in it there was a bed, a table, one chair, and a place on the dirt floor to cook with charcoal. On the brown walls of the flattened, overlapping leaves of the sturdy fibered *guano* there was a picture in color of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and another of the Virgin of Cobre. These were relics of his wife. Once there had been a tinted photograph of his wife on the wall but he had taken it down because it made him too lonely to see it and it was on the shelf in the corner under his clean shirt.

"What do you have to eat?" the boy asked.

"A pot of yellow rice with fish. Do you want some?"

"No. I will eat at home. Do you want me to make the fire?"

"No. I will make it later on. Or I may eat the rice cold."

"May I take the cast net?"

"Of course."

There was no cast net and the boy remembered when they had sold it. But they went through this fiction every day. There was no pot of yellow rice and fish and the boy knew this too.

"Eighty-five is a lucky number," the old man said. "How would you like to see me bring one in that dressed out over a thousand pounds?"

"I'll get the cast net and go for sardines. Will you sit in the sun in the doorway?"

"Yes. I have yesterday's paper and I will read the baseball."

The boy did not know whether yesterday's paper was a fiction too. But the old man brought it out from under the bed.

"Perico gave it to me at the *bodega*," he explained.

"I'll be back when I have the sardines. I'll keep yours and mine together on ice and we can share them in the morning. When I come back you can tell me about the baseball."

"The Yankees cannot lose."

"But I fear the Indians of Cleveland."

“Have faith in the Yankees my son. Think of the great DiMaggio.”

“I fear both the Tigers of Detroit and the Indians of Cleveland.”

“Be careful or you will fear even the Reds of Cincinnati and the White Sox of Chicago.”

“You study it and tell me when I come back.”

“Do you think we should buy a terminal of the lottery with an eighty-five? Tomorrow is the eighty-fifth day.”

“We can do that,” the boy said. “But what about the eighty-seven of your great record?”

“It could not happen twice. Do you think you can find an eighty-five?”

“I can order one.”

“One sheet. That’s two dollars and a half. Who can we borrow that from?”

“That’s easy. I can always borrow two dollars and a half.”

“I think perhaps I can too. But I try not to borrow. First you borrow. Then you beg.”

“Keep warm old man,” the boy said. “Remember we are in September.”

“The month when the great fish come,” the old man said. “Anyone can be fisherman in May.”

“I go now for the sardines,” the boy said.

When the boy came back the old man was asleep in the chair and the sun was down. The boy took the old army blanket off the bed and spread it over the back of the chair and over the old man’s shoulders. They were strange shoulders, still powerful although very old, and the neck was still strong too and the creases did not show so much when the old man was asleep and his head fallen forward. His shirt had been patched so many times that it was like the sail and the patches were faded to many different shades by the sun. The old man’s head was very old though and with his eyes closed there was no life in his face. The newspaper lay across his

knees and the weight of his arm held it there in the evening breeze. He was barefooted.

The boy left him there and when he came back the old man was still asleep.

"Wake up old man," the boy said and put his hand on one of the old man's knees.

The old man opened his eyes and for a moment he was coming back from a long way away. Then he smiled.

"What have you got?" he asked.

"Supper," said the boy. "We're going to have supper."

"I'm not very hungry."

"Come on and eat. You can't fish and not eat."

"I have," the old man said getting up and taking the newspaper and folding it. Then he started to fold the blanket.

"Keep the blanket around you," the boy said. "You'll not fish without eating while I'm alive."

"Then live a long time and take care of yourself," the old man said. "What are we eating?"

"Black beans and rice, fried bananas, and some stew."

The boy had brought them in a two-decker metal container from the Terrace. The two sets of knives and forks and spoons were in his pocket with a paper napkin wrapped around each set.

"Who gave this to you?"

"Martin. The owner."

"I must thank him."

"I thanked him already," the boy said. "You don't need to thank him."

"I'll give him the belly meat of a big fish," the old man said. "Has he done this for us more than once?"

"I think so."

"I must give him something more than the belly meat then. He is very thoughtful for us."

"He sent two beers."

“I like the beer in cans best.”

“I know. But this is in bottles, Hatuey beer, and I take back the bottles.”

“That’s very kind of you,” the old man said. “Should we eat?”

“I’ve been asking you to,” the boy told him gently. “I have not wished to open the container until you were ready.”

“I’m ready now,” the old man said. “I only needed time to wash.”

Where did you wash? the boy thought. The village water supply was two streets down the road. I must have water here for him, the boy thought, and soap and a good towel. Why am I so thoughtless? I must get him another shirt and a jacket for the winter and some sort of shoes and another blanket.

“Your stew is excellent,” the old man said.

“Tell me about the baseball,” the boy asked him.

“In the American League it is the Yankees as I said,” the old man said happily.

“They lost today,” the boy told him.

“That means nothing. The great DiMaggio is himself again.”

“They have other men on the team.”

“Naturally. But he makes the difference. In the other league, between Brooklyn and Philadelphia I must take Brooklyn. But then I think of Dick Sisler and those great drives in the old park.”

“There was nothing ever like them. He hits the longest ball I have ever seen.”

“Do you remember when he used to come to the Terrace? I wanted to take him fishing but I was too timid to ask him. Then I asked you to ask him and you were too timid.”

“I know. It was a great mistake. He might have gone with us. Then we would have that for all of our lives.”

“I would like to take the great DiMaggio fishing,” the old man said. “They say his father was a fisherman. Maybe he was as poor as we are and would understand.”

“The great Sisler’s father was never poor and he, the father, was playing in the Big Leagues when he was my age.”

“When I was your age I was before the mast on a square rigged ship that ran to Africa and I have seen lions on the beaches in the evening.”

“I know. You told me.”

“Should we talk about Africa or about baseball?”

“Baseball I think,” the boy said. “Tell me about the great John J. McGraw.” He said *Jota* for J.

“He used to come to the Terrace sometimes too in the older days. But he was rough and harsh-spoken and difficult when he was drinking. His mind was on horses as well as baseball. At least he carried lists of horses at all times in his pocket and frequently spoke the names of horses on the telephone.”

“He was a great manager,” the boy said. “My father thinks he was the greatest.”

“Because he came here the most times,” the old man said. “If Durocher had continued to come here each year your father would think him the greatest manager.”

“Who is the greatest manager, really, Luque or Mike Gonzalez?”

“I think they are equal.”

“And the best fisherman is you.”

“No. I know others better.”

“*Que va*,” the boy said. “There are many good fishermen and some great ones. But there is only you.”

“Thank you. You make me happy. I hope no fish will come along so great that he will prove us wrong.”

“There is no such fish if you are still strong as you say.”

“I may not be as strong as I think,” the old man said. “But I know many tricks and I have resolution.”

“You ought to go to bed now so that you will be fresh in the morning. I will take the things back to the Terrace.”

“Good night then. I will wake you in the morning.” “You’re my

alarm clock," the boy said.

"Age is my alarm clock," the old man said. "Why do old men wake so early? Is it to have one longer day?"

"I don't know," the boy said. "All I know is that young boys sleep late and hard."

"I can remember it," the old man said. "I'll waken you in time."

"I do not like for him to waken me. It is as though I were inferior."

"I know."

"Sleep well old man."

The boy went out. They had eaten with no light on the table and the old man took off his trousers and went to bed in the dark. He rolled his trousers up to make a pillow, putting the newspaper inside them. He rolled himself in the blanket and slept on the other old newspapers that covered the springs of the bed.

He was asleep in a short time and he dreamed of Africa when he was a boy and the long golden beaches and the white beaches, so white they hurt your eyes, and the high capes and the great brown mountains. He lived along that coast now every night and in his dreams he heard the surf roar and saw the native boats come riding through it. He smelled the tar and oakum of the deck as he slept and he smelled the smell of Africa that the land breeze brought at morning.

Usually when he smelled the land breeze he woke up and dressed to go and wake the boy. But tonight the smell of the land breeze came very early and he knew it was too early in his dream and went on dreaming to see the white peaks of the Islands rising from the sea and then he dreamed of the different harbours and roadsteads of the Canary Islands.

He no longer dreamed of storms, nor of women, nor of great occurrences, nor of great fish, nor fights, nor contests of strength, nor of his wife. He only dreamed of places now and of the lions on the beach. They played like young cats in the dusk and he loved

them as he loved the boy. He never dreamed about the boy. He simply woke, looked out the open door at the moon and unrolled his trousers and put them on. He urinated outside the shack and then went up the road to wake the boy. He was shivering with the morning cold. But he knew he would shiver himself warm and that soon he would be rowing.

The door of the house where the boy lived was unlocked and he opened it and walked in quietly with his bare feet. The boy was asleep on a cot in the first room and the old man could see him clearly with the light that came in from the dying moon. He took hold of one foot gently and held it until the boy woke and turned and looked at him. The old man nodded and the boy took his trousers from the chair by the bed and, sitting on the bed, pulled them on.

The old man went out the door and the boy came after him. He was sleepy and the old man put his arm across his shoulders and said, "I am sorry."

"Que va," the boy said. "It is what a man must do."

They walked down the road to the old man's shack and all along the road, in the dark, barefoot men were moving, carrying the masts of their boats.

When they reached the old man's shack the boy took the rolls of line in the basket and the harpoon and gaff and the old man carried the mast with the furled sail on his shoulder.

"Do you want coffee?" the boy asked.

"We'll put the gear in the boat and then get some." They had coffee from condensed milk cans at an early morning place that served fishermen.

"How did you sleep old man?" the boy asked. He was waking up now although it was still hard for him to leave his sleep.

"Very well, Manolin," the old man said. "I feel confident today."

"So do I," the boy said. "Now I must get your sardines and mine and your fresh baits. He brings our gear himself. He never wants

anyone to carry anything."

"We're different," the old man said. "I let you carry things when you were five years old."

"I know it," the boy said. "I'll be right back. Have another coffee. We have credit here."

He walked off, bare-footed on the coral rocks, to the ice house where the baits were stored.

The old man drank his coffee slowly. It was all he would have all day and he knew that he should take it. For a long time now eating had bored him and he never carried a lunch. He had a bottle of water in the bow of the skiff and that was all he needed for the day.

The boy was back now with the sardines and the two baits wrapped in a newspaper and they went down the trail to the skiff, feeling the pebbled sand under their feet, and lifted the skiff and slid her into the water.

"Good luck old man."

"Good luck," the old man said. He fitted the rope lashings of the oars onto the thole pins and, leaning forward against the thrust of the blades in the water, he began to row out of the harbour in the dark. There were other boats from the other beaches going out to sea and the old man heard the dip and push of their oars even though he could not see them now the moon was below the hills.

Sometimes someone would speak in a boat. But most of the boats were silent except for the dip of the oars. They spread apart after they were out of the mouth of the harbour and each one headed for the part of the ocean where he hoped to find fish. The old man knew he was going far out and he left the smell of the land behind and rowed out into the clean early morning smell of the ocean. He saw the phosphorescence of the Gulf weed in the water as he rowed over the part of the ocean that the fishermen called the great well because there was a sudden deep of seven hundred fathoms where all sorts of fish congregated because of the swirl the

current made against the steep walls of the floor of the ocean. Here there were concentrations of shrimp and bait fish and sometimes schools of squid in the deepest holes and these rose close to the surface at night where all the wandering fish fed on them.

In the dark the old man could feel the morning coming and as he rowed he heard the trembling sound as flying fish left the water and the hissing that their stiff set wings made as they soared away in the darkness. He was very fond of flying fish as they were his principal friends on the ocean. He was sorry for the birds, especially the small delicate dark terns that were always flying and looking and almost never finding, and he thought, the birds have a harder life than we do except for the robber birds and the heavy strong ones. Why did they make birds so delicate and fine as those sea swallows when the ocean can be so cruel? She is kind and very beautiful. But she can be so cruel and it comes so suddenly and such birds that fly, dipping and hunting, with their small sad voices are made too delicately for the sea.

He always thought of the sea as *la mar* which is what people call her in Spanish when they love her. Sometimes those who love her say bad things of her but they are always said as though she were a woman. Some of the younger fishermen, those who used buoys as floats for their lines and had motorboats, bought when the shark livers had brought much money, spoke of her as *el mar* which is masculine. They spoke of her as a contestant or a place or even an enemy. But the old man always thought of her as feminine and as something that gave or withheld great favours, and if she did wild or wicked things it was because she could not help them. The moon affects her as it does a woman, he thought.

He was rowing steadily and it was no effort for him since he kept well within his speed and the surface of the ocean was flat except for the occasional swirls of the current. He was letting the current do a third of the work and as it started to be light he saw he was already further out than he had hoped to be at this hour.

I worked the deep wells for a week and did nothing, he thought. Today I'll work out where the schools of bonito and albacore are and maybe there will be a big one with them.

Before it was really light he had his baits out and was drifting with the current. One bait was down forty fathoms. The second was at seventy-five and the third and fourth were down in the blue water at one hundred and one hundred and twenty-five fathoms. Each bait hung head down with the shank of the hook inside the bait fish, tied and sewed solid and all the projecting part of the hook, the curve and the point, was covered with fresh sardines. Each sardine was hooked through both eyes so that they made a half-garland on the projecting steel. There was no part of the hook that a great fish could feel which was not sweet smelling and good tasting.

The boy had given him two fresh small tunas, or albacores, which hung on the two deepest lines like plummets and, on the others, he had a big blue runner and a yellow jack that had been used before; but they were in good condition still and had the excellent sardines to give them scent and attractiveness. Each line, as thick around as a big pencil, was looped onto a green-sapped stick so that any pull or touch on the bait would make the stick dip and each line had two forty-fathom coils which could be made fast to the other spare coils so that, if it were necessary, a fish could take out over three hundred fathoms of line.

Now the man watched the dip of the three sticks over the side of the skiff and rowed gently to keep the lines straight up and down and at their proper depths. It was quite light and any moment now the sun would rise.

The sun rose thinly from the sea and the old man could see the other boats, low on the water and well in toward the shore, spread out across the current. Then the sun was brighter and the glare came on the water and then, as it rose clear, the flat sea sent it back at his eyes so that it hurt sharply and he rowed without looking into

it. He looked down into the water and watched the lines that went straight down into the dark of the water. He kept them straighter than anyone did, so that at each level in the darkness of the stream there would be a bait waiting exactly where he wished it to be for any fish that swam there. Others let them drift with the current and sometimes they were at sixty fathoms when the fishermen thought they were at a hundred.

But, he thought, I keep them with precision. Only I have no luck any more. But who knows? Maybe today. Every day is a new day. It is better to be lucky. But I would rather be exact. Then when luck comes you are ready.

The sun was two hours higher now and it did not hurt his eyes so much to look into the east. There were only three boats in sight now and they showed very low and far inshore.

All my life the early sun has hurt my eyes, he thought. Yet they are still good. In the evening I can look straight into it without getting the blackness. It has more force in the evening too. But in the morning it is painful.

Just then he saw a man-of-war bird with his long black wings circling in the sky ahead of him. He made a quick drop, slanting down on his back-swept wings, and then circled again.

“He’s got something,” the old man said aloud. “He’s not just looking.”

He rowed slowly and steadily toward where the bird was circling. He did not hurry and he kept his lines straight up and down. But he crowded the current a little so that he was still fishing correctly though faster than he would have fished if he was not trying to use the bird.

The bird went higher in the air and circled again, his wings motionless. Then he dove suddenly and the old man saw flying fish spurt out of the water and sail desperately over the surface.

“Dolphin,” the old man said aloud. “Big dolphin.”

He shipped his oars and brought a small line from under the

bow. It had a wire leader and a medium-sized hook and he baited it with one of the sardines. He let it go over the side and then made it fast to a ring bolt in the stern. Then he baited another line and left it coiled in the shade of the bow. He went back to rowing and to watching the long-winged black bird who was working, now, low over the water.

As he watched the bird dipped again slanting his wings for the dive and then swinging them wildly and ineffectually as he followed the flying fish. The old man could see the slight bulge in the water that the big dolphin raised as they followed the escaping fish. The dolphin were cutting through the water below the Bight of the fish and would be in the water, driving at speed, when the fish dropped. It is a big school of dolphin, he thought. They are widespread and the flying fish have little chance. The bird has no chance. The flying fish are too big for him and they go too fast.

He watched the flying fish burst out again and again and the ineffectual movements of the bird. That school has gotten away from me, he thought. They are moving out too fast and too far. But perhaps I will pick up a stray and perhaps my big fish is around them. My big fish must be somewhere.

The clouds over the land now rose like mountains and the coast was only a long green line with the gray blue hills behind it. The water was a dark blue now, so dark that it was almost purple. As he looked down into it he saw the red sifting of the plankton in the dark water and the strange light the sun made now. He watched his lines to see them go straight down out of sight into the water and he was happy to see so much plankton because it meant fish. The strange light the sun made in the water, now that the sun was higher, meant good weather and so did the shape of the clouds over the land. But the bird was almost out of sight now and nothing showed on the surface of the water but some patches of yellow, sun-bleached Sargasso weed and the purple, formalized, iridescent, gelatinous bladder of a Portuguese man-of-war floating close beside

the boat. It turned on its side and then righted itself. It floated cheerfully as a bubble with its long deadly purple filaments trailing a yard behind it in the water.

"*Agua mala*," the old man said. "You whore."

From where he swung lightly against his oars he looked down into the water and saw the tiny fish that were coloured like the trailing filaments and swam between them and under the small shade the bubble made as it drifted. They were immune to its poison. But men were not and when some of the filaments would catch on a line and rest there slimy and purple while the old man was working a fish, he would have welts and sores on his arms and hands of the sort that poison ivy or poison oak can give. But these poisonings from the *agua mala* came quickly and struck like a whiplash.

The iridescent bubbles were beautiful. But they were the falsest thing in the sea and the old man loved to see the big sea turtles eating them. The turtles saw them, approached them from the front, then shut their eyes so they were completely carapaced and ate them filaments and all. The old man loved to see the turtles eat them and he loved to walk on them on the beach after a storm and hear them pop when he stepped on them with the horny soles of his feet.

He loved green turtles and hawk-bills with their elegance and speed and their great value and he had a friendly contempt for the huge, stupid loggerheads, yellow in their armour-plating, strange in their lovemaking, and happily eating the Portuguese men-of-war with their eyes shut.

He had no mysticism about turtles although he had gone in turtle boats for many years. He was sorry for them all, even the great trunk backs that were as long as the skiff and weighed a ton. Most people are heartless about turtles because a turtle's heart will beat for hours after he has been cut up and butchered. But the old man thought, I have such a heart too and my feet and hands are

like theirs. He ate the white eggs to give himself strength. He ate them all through May to be strong in September and October for the truly big fish.

He also drank a cup of shark liver oil each day from the big drum in the shack where many of the fishermen kept their gear. It was there for all fishermen who wanted it. Most fishermen hated the taste. But it was no worse than getting up at the hours that they rose and it was very good against all colds and grippes and it was good for the eyes.

Now the old man looked up and saw that the bird was circling again.

"He's found fish," he said aloud. No flying fish broke the surface and there was no scattering of bait fish. But as the old man watched, a small tuna rose in the air, turned and dropped head first into the water. The tuna shone silver in the sun and after he had dropped back into the water another and another rose and they were jumping in all directions, churning the water and leaping in long jumps after the bait. They were circling it and driving it.

If they don't travel too fast I will get into them, the old man thought, and he watched the school working the water white and the bird now dropping and dipping into the bait fish that were forced to the surface in their panic.

"The bird is a great help," the old man said. Just then the stern line came taut under his foot, where he had kept a loop of the line, and he dropped his oars and felt the weight of the small tuna's shivering pull as he held the line firm and commenced to haul it in. The shivering increased as he pulled in and he could see the blue back of the fish in the water and the gold of his sides before he swung him over the side and into the boat. He lay in the stern in the sun, compact and bullet shaped, his big, unintelligent eyes staring as he thumped his life out against the planking of the boat with the quick shivering strokes of his neat, fast-moving tail. The old man hit him on the head for kindness and kicked him, his body

still shuddering, under the shade of the stern.

"Albacore," he said aloud. "He'll make a beautiful bait. He'll weigh ten pounds."

He did not remember when he had first started to talk aloud when he was by himself. He had sung when he was by himself in the old days and he had sung at night sometimes when he was alone steering on his watch in the smacks or in the turtle boats. He had probably started to talk aloud, when alone, when the boy had left. But he did not remember. When he and the boy fished together they usually spoke only when it was necessary. They talked at night or when they were storm-bound by bad weather. It was considered a virtue not to talk unnecessarily at sea and the old man had always considered it so and respected it. But now he said his thoughts aloud many times since there was no one that they could annoy.

"If the others heard me talking out loud they would think that I am crazy," he said aloud. "But since I am not crazy, I do not care. And the rich have radios to talk to them in their boats and to bring them the baseball."

Now is no time to think of baseball, he thought.

Now is the time to think of only one thing. That which I was born for. There might be a big one around that school, he thought. I picked up only a straggler from the albacore that were feeding. But they are working far out and fast. Everything that shows on the surface today travels very fast and to the north-east. Can that be the time of day? Or is it some sign of weather that I do not know?

He could not see the green of the shore now but only the tops of the blue hills that showed white as though they were snow-capped and the clouds that looked like high snow mountains above them. The sea was very dark and the light made prisms in the water. The myriad flecks of the plankton were annulled now by the high sun and it was only the great deep prisms in the blue water that the old man saw now with his lines going straight down into the water that was a mile deep.

The tuna, the fishermen called all the fish of that species tuna and only distinguished among them by their proper names when they came to sell them or to trade them for baits, were down again. The sun was hot now and the old man felt it on the back of his neck and felt the sweat trickle down his back as he rowed.

I could just drift, he thought, and sleep and put a bight of line around my toe to wake me. But today is eighty-five days and I should fish the day well.

Just then, watching his lines, he saw one of the projecting green sticks dip sharply.

"Yes," he said. "Yes," and shipped his oars without bumping the boat. He reached out for the line and held it softly between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand. He felt no strain nor weight and he held the line lightly. Then it came again. This time it was a tentative pull, not solid nor heavy, and he knew exactly what it was. One hundred fathoms down a marlin was eating the sardines that covered the point and the shank of the hook where the hand-forged hook projected from the head of the small tuna.

The old man held the line delicately, and softly, with his left hand, unleashed it from the stick. Now he could let it run through his fingers without the fish feeling any tension.

This far out, he must be huge in this month, he thought. Eat them, fish. Eat them. Please eat them. How fresh they are and you down there six hundred feet in that cold water in the dark. Make another turn in the dark and come back and eat them.

He felt the light delicate pulling and then a harder pull when a sardine's head must have been more difficult to break from the hook. Then there was nothing.

"Come on," the old man said aloud. "Make another turn. Just smell them. Aren't they lovely? Eat them good now and then there is the tuna. Hard and cold and lovely. Don't be shy, fish. Eat them."

He waited with the line between his thumb and his finger, watching it and the other lines at the same time for the fish might

have swum up or down. Then came the same delicate pulling touch again.

"He'll take it," the old man said aloud. "God help him to take it."

He did not take it though. He was gone and the old man felt nothing.

"He can't have gone," he said. "Christ knows he can't have gone. He's making a turn. Maybe he has been hooked before and he remembers something of it."

Then he felt the gentle touch on the line and he was happy.

"It was only his turn," he said. "He'll take it."

He was happy feeling the gentle pulling and then he felt something hard and unbelievably heavy. It was the weight of the fish and he let the line slip down, down, down, unrolling off the first of the two reserve coils. As it went down, slipping lightly through the old man's fingers, he still could feel the great weight, though the pressure of his thumb and finger were almost imperceptible.

"What a fish," he said. "He has it sideways in his mouth now and he is moving off with it."

Then he will turn and swallow it, he thought. He did not say that because he knew that if you said a good thing it might not happen. He knew what a huge fish this was and he thought of him moving away in the darkness with the tuna held crosswise in his mouth. At that moment he felt him stop moving but the weight was still there. Then the weight increased and he gave more line. He tightened the pressure of his thumb and finger for a moment and the weight increased and was going straight down.

"He's taken it," he said. "Now I'll let him eat it well."

He let the line slip through his fingers while he reached down with his left hand and made fast the free end of the two reserve coils to the loop of the two reserve coils of the next line. Now he was ready. He had three forty-fathom coils of line in reserve now,

as well as the coil he was using.

"Eat it a little more," he said. "Eat it well."

Eat it so that the point of the hook goes into your heart and kills you, he thought. Come up easy and let me put the harpoon into you. All right. Are you ready? Have you been long enough at table?

"Now!" he said aloud and struck hard with both hands, gained a yard of line and then struck again and again, swinging with each arm alternately on the cord with all the strength of his arms and the pivoted weight of his body.

Nothing happened. The fish just moved away slowly and the old man could not raise him an inch. His line was strong and made for heavy fish and he held it against his back until it was so taut that beads of water were jumping from it. Then it began to make a slow hissing sound in the water and he still held it, bracing himself against the thwart and leaning back against the pull. The boat began to move slowly off toward the north-west.

The fish moved steadily and they travelled slowly on the calm water. The other baits were still in the water but there was nothing to be done.

"I wish I had the boy," the old man said aloud. "I'm being towed by a fish and I'm the towing bitt. I could make the line fast. But then he could break it. I must hold him all I can and give him line when he must have it. Thank God he is travelling and not going down."

What I will do if he decides to go down, I don't know. What I'll do if he sounds and dies I don't know. But I'll do something. There are plenty of things I can do.

He held the line against his back and watched its slant in the water and the skiff moving steadily to the north-west.

This will kill him, the old man thought. He can't do this forever. But four hours later the fish was still swimming steadily out to sea, towing the skiff, and the old man was still braced solidly with the line across his back.

“It was noon when I hooked him,” he said. “And I have never seen him.”

He had pushed his straw hat hard down on his head before he hooked the fish and it was cutting his forehead. He was thirsty too and he got down on his knees and, being careful not to jerk on the line, moved as far into the bow as he could get and reached the water bottle with one hand. He opened it and drank a little. Then he rested against the bow. He rested sitting on the un-stepped mast and sail and tried not to think but only to endure.

Then he looked behind him and saw that no land was visible. That makes no difference, he thought. I can always come in on the glow from Havana. There are two more hours before the sun sets and maybe he will come up before that. If he doesn’t maybe he will come up with the moon. If he does not do that maybe he will come up with the sunrise. I have no cramps and I feel strong. It is he that has the hook in his mouth. But what a fish to pull like that. He must have his mouth shut tight on the wire. I wish I could see him. I wish I could see him only once to know what I have against me.

The fish never changed his course nor his direction all that night as far as the man could tell from watching the stars. It was cold after the sun went down and the old man’s sweat dried cold on his back and his arms and his old legs. During the day he had taken the sack that covered the bait box and spread it in the sun to dry. After the sun went down he tied it around his neck so that it hung down over his back and he cautiously worked it down under the line that was across his shoulders now. The sack cushioned the line and he had found a way of leaning forward against the bow so that he was almost comfortable. The position actually was only somewhat less intolerable; but he thought of it as almost comfortable.

I can do nothing with him and he can do nothing with me, he thought. Not as long as he keeps this up.

Once he stood up and urinated over the side of the skiff and looked at the stars and checked his course. The line showed like a

phosphorescent streak in the water straight out from his shoulders. They were moving more slowly now and the glow of Havana was not so strong, so that he knew the current must be carrying them to the eastward. If I lose the glare of Havana we must be going more to the eastward, he thought. For if the fish's course held true I must see it for many more hours. I wonder how the baseball came out in the grand leagues today, he thought. It would be wonderful to do this with a radio. Then he thought, think of it always. Think of what you are doing. You must do nothing stupid.

Then he said aloud, "I wish I had the boy. To help me and to see this."

No one should be alone in their old age, he thought. But it is unavoidable. I must remember to eat the tuna before he spoils in order to keep strong. Remember, no matter how little you want to, that you must eat him in the morning. Remember, he said to himself.

During the night two porpoises came around the boat and he could hear them rolling and blowing. He could tell the difference between the blowing noise the male made and the sighing blow of the female.

"They are good," he said. "They play and make jokes and love one another. They are our brothers like the flying fish."

Then he began to pity the great fish that he had hooked. He is wonderful and strange and who knows how old he is, he thought. Never have I had such a strong fish nor one who acted so strangely. Perhaps he is too wise to jump. He could ruin me by jumping or by a wild rush. But perhaps he has been hooked many times before and he knows that this is how he should make his fight. He cannot know that it is only one man against him, nor that it is an old man. But what a great fish he is and what will he bring in the market if the flesh is good. He took the bait like a male and he pulls like a male and his fight has no panic in it. I wonder if he has any plans or if he is just as desperate as I am?

He remembered the time he had hooked one of a pair of marlin. The male fish always let the female fish feed first and the hooked fish, the female, made a wild, panic-stricken, despairing fight that soon exhausted her, and all the time the male had stayed with her, crossing the line and circling with her on the surface. He had stayed so close that the old man was afraid he would cut the line with his tail which was sharp as a scythe and almost of that size and shape. When the old man had gaffed her and clubbed her, holding the rapier bill with its sandpaper edge and clubbing her across the top of her head until her colour turned to a colour almost like the backing of mirrors, and then, with the boy's aid, hoisted her aboard, the male fish had stayed by the side of the boat. Then, while the old man was clearing the lines and preparing the harpoon, the male fish jumped high into the air beside the boat to see where the female was and then went down deep, his lavender wings, that were his pectoral fins, spread wide and all his wide lavender stripes showing. He was beautiful, the old man remembered, and he had stayed.

That was the saddest thing I ever saw with them, the old man thought. The boy was sad too and we begged her pardon and butchered her promptly.

"I wish the boy was here," he said aloud and settled himself against the rounded planks of the bow and felt the strength of the great fish through the line he held across his shoulders moving steadily toward whatever he had chosen.

When once, through my treachery, it had been necessary to him to make a choice, the old man thought.

His choice had been to stay in the deep dark water far out beyond all snares and traps and treacheries. My choice was to go there to find him beyond all people. Beyond all people in the world. Now we are joined together and have been since noon. And no one to help either one of us.

Perhaps I should not have been a fisherman, he thought. But that was the thing that I was born for. I must surely remember to

eat the tuna after it gets light.

Some time before daylight something took one of the baits that were behind him. He heard the stick break and the line begin to rush out over the gunwale of the skiff. In the darkness he loosened his sheath knife and taking all the strain of the fish on his left shoulder he leaned back and cut the line against the wood of the gunwale. Then he cut the other line closest to him and in the dark made the loose ends of the reserve coils fast. He worked skillfully with the one hand and put his foot on the coils to hold them as he drew his knots tight. Now he had six reserve coils of line. There were two from each bait he had severed and the two from the bait the fish had taken and they were all connected.

After it is light, he thought, I will work back to the forty-fathom bait and cut it away too and link up the reserve coils. I will have lost two hundred fathoms of good Catalan *cardel* and the hooks and leaders. That can be replaced. But who replaces this fish if I hook some fish and it cuts him off? I don't know what that fish was that took the bait just now. It could have been a marlin or a broadbill or a shark. I never felt him. I had to get rid of him too fast.

Aloud he said, "I wish I had the boy."

But you haven't got the boy, he thought. You have only yourself and you had better work back to the last line now, in the dark or not in the dark, and cut it away and hook up the two reserve coils.

So he did it. It was difficult in the dark and once the fish made a surge that pulled him down on his face and made a cut below his eye. The blood ran down his cheek a little way. But it coagulated and dried before it reached his chin and he worked his way back to the bow and rested against the wood. He adjusted the sack and carefully worked the line so that it came across a new part of his shoulders and, holding it anchored with his shoulders, he carefully felt the pull of the fish and then felt with his hand the progress of the skiff through the water.

I wonder what he made that lurch for, he thought. The wire

must have slipped on the great hill of his back. Certainly his back cannot feel as badly as mine does. But he cannot pull this skiff forever, no matter how great he is. Now everything is cleared away that might make trouble and I have a big reserve of line; all that a man can ask.

"Fish," he said softly, aloud, "I'll stay with you until I am dead."

He'll stay with me too, I suppose, the old man thought and he waited for it to be light. It was cold now in the time before daylight and he pushed against the wood to be warm. I can do it as long as he can, he thought. And in the first light the line extended out and down into the water. The boat moved steadily and when the first edge of the sun rose it was on the old man's right shoulder.

"He's headed north," the old man said. The current will have set us far to the eastward, he thought. I wish he would turn with the current. That would show that he was tiring.

When the sun had risen further the old man realized that the fish was not tiring. There was only one favorable sign. The slant of the line showed he was swimming at a lesser depth. That did not necessarily mean that he would jump. But he might.

"God let him jump," the old man said. "I have enough line to handle him."

Maybe if I can increase the tension just a little it will hurt him and he will jump, he thought. Now that it is daylight let him jump so that he'll fill the sacks along his backbone with air and then he cannot go deep to die.

He tried to increase the tension, but the line had been taut up to the very edge of the breaking point since he had hooked the fish and he felt the harshness as he leaned back to pull and knew he could put no more strain on it. I must not jerk it ever, he thought. Each jerk widens the cut the hook makes and then when he does jump he might throw it. Anyway I feel better with the sun and for once I do not have to look into it.

There was yellow weed on the line but the old man knew that

only made an added drag and he was pleased. It was the yellow Gulf weed that had made so much phosphorescence in the night.

"Fish," he said, "I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends."

Let us hope so, he thought.

A small bird came toward the skiff from the north. He was a warbler and flying very low over the water. The old man could see that he was very tired.

The bird made the stern of the boat and rested there. Then he flew around the old man's head and rested on the line where he was more comfortable.

"How old are you?" the old man asked the bird. "Is this your first trip?"

The bird looked at him when he spoke. He was too tired even to examine the line and he teetered on it as his delicate feet gripped it fast.

"It's steady," the old man told him. "It's too steady. You shouldn't be that tired after a windless night. What are birds coming to?"

The hawks, he thought, that come out to sea to meet them. But he said nothing of this to the bird who could not understand him anyway and who would learn about the hawks soon enough.

"Take a good rest, small bird," he said. "Then go in and take your chance like any man or bird or fish."

It encouraged him to talk because his back had stiffened in the night and it hurt truly now.

"Stay at my house if you like, bird," he said. "I am sorry I cannot hoist the sail and take you in with the small breeze that is rising. But I am with a friend."

Just then the fish gave a sudden lurch that pulled the old man down onto the bow and would have pulled him overboard if he had not braced himself and given some line.

The bird had flown up when the line jerked and the old man had

not even seen him go. He felt the line carefully with his right hand and noticed his hand was bleeding.

"Something hurt him then," he said aloud and pulled back on the line to see if he could turn the fish. But when he was touching the breaking point he held steady and settled back against the strain of the line.

"You're feeling it now, fish," he said. "And so, God knows, am I."

He looked around for the bird now because he would have liked him for company. The bird was gone.

You did not stay long, the man thought. But it is rougher where you are going until you make the shore. How did I let the fish cut me with that one quick pull he made? I must be getting very stupid. Or perhaps I was looking at the small bird and thinking of him. Now I will pay attention to my work and then I must eat the tuna so that I will not have a failure of strength.

"I wish the boy were here and that I had some salt," he said aloud.

Shifting the weight of the line to his left shoulder and kneeling carefully he washed his hand in the ocean and held it there, submerged, for more than a minute watching the blood trail away and the steady movement of the water against his hand as the boat moved.

"He has slowed much," he said.

The old man would have liked to keep his hand in the salt water longer but he was afraid of another sudden lurch by the fish and he stood up and braced himself and held his hand up against the sun. It was only a line burn that had cut his flesh. But it was in the working part of his hand. He knew he would need his hands before this was over and he did not like to be cut before it started.

"Now," he said, when his hand had dried, "I must eat the small tuna. I can reach him with the gaff and eat him here in comfort."

He knelt down and found the tuna under the stern with the gaff

and drew it toward him keeping it clear of the coiled lines. Holding the line with his left shoulder again, and bracing on his left hand and arm, he took the tuna off the gaff hook and put the gaff back in place. He put one knee on the fish and cut strips of dark red meat longitudinally from the back of the head to the tail. They were wedge-shaped strips and he cut them from next to the back bone down to the edge of the belly. When he had cut six strips he spread them out on the wood of the bow, wiped his knife on his trousers, and lifted the carcass of the bonito by the tail and dropped it overboard.

"I don't think I can eat an entire one," he said and drew his knife across one of the strips. He could feel the steady hard pull of the line and his left hand was cramped. It drew up tight on the heavy cord and he looked at it in disgust.

"What kind of a hand is that," he said. "Cramp then if you want. Make yourself into a claw. It will do you no good."

Come on, he thought and looked down into the dark water at the slant of the line. Eat it now and it will strengthen the hand. It is not the hand's fault and you have been many hours with the fish. But you can stay with him forever. Eat the bonito now.

He picked up a piece and put it in his mouth and chewed it slowly. It was not unpleasant.

Chew it well, he thought, and get all the juices. It would not be bad to eat with a little lime or with lemon or with salt.

"How do you feel, hand?" he asked the cramped hand that was almost as stiff as rigor mortis. "I'll eat some more for you."

He ate the other part of the piece that he had cut in two. He chewed it carefully and then spat out the skin.

"How does it go, hand? Or is it too early to know?" He took another full piece and chewed it.

"It is a strong full-blooded fish," he thought. "I was lucky to get him instead of dolphin. Dolphin is too sweet. This is hardly sweet at all and all the strength is still in it."

There is no sense in being anything but practical though, he thought. I wish I had some salt. And I do not know whether the sun will rot or dry what is left, so I had better eat it all although I am not hungry. The fish is calm and steady. I will eat it all and then I will be ready.

"Be patient, hand," he said. "I do this for you."

I wish I could feed the fish, he thought. He is my brother. But I must kill him and keep strong to do it. Slowly and conscientiously he ate all of the wedge-shaped strips of fish.

He straightened up, wiping his hand on his trousers. "Now," he said. "You can let the cord go, hand, and I will handle him with the right arm alone until you stop that nonsense." He put his left foot on the heavy line that the left hand had held and lay back against the pull against his back.

"God help me to have the cramp go," he said. "Because I do not know what the fish is going to do."

But he seems calm, he thought, and following his plan. But what is his plan, he thought. And what is mine? Mine I must improvise to his because of his great size. If he will jump I can kill him. But he stays down forever. Then I will stay down with him forever.

He rubbed the cramped hand against his trousers and tried to gentle the fingers. But it would not open. Maybe it will open with the sun, he thought. Maybe it will open when the strong raw tuna is digested. If I have to have it, I will open it, cost whatever it costs. But I do not want to open it now by force. Let it open by itself and come back of its own accord. After all I abused it much in the night when it was necessary to free and untie the various lines.

He looked across the sea and knew how alone he was now. But he could see the prisms in the deep dark water and the line stretching ahead and the strange undulation of the calm. The clouds were building up now for the trade wind and he looked ahead and saw a flight of wild ducks etching themselves against the sky over the water, then blurring, then etching again and he knew no man

was ever alone on the sea.

He thought of how some men feared being out of sight of land in a small boat and knew they were right in the months of sudden bad weather. But now they were in hurricane months and, when there are no hurricanes, the weather of hurricane months is the best of all the year.

If there is a hurricane you always see the signs of it in the sky for days ahead, if you are at sea. They do not see it ashore because they do not know what to look for, he thought. The land must make a difference too, in the shape of the clouds. But we have no hurricane coming now.

He looked at the sky and saw the white cumulus built like friendly piles of ice cream and high above were the thin feathers of the cirrus against the high September sky.

"Light *brisa*," he said. "Better weather for me than for you, fish."

His left hand was still cramped, but he was unknotting it slowly.

I hate a cramp, he thought. It is a treachery of one's own body. It is humiliating before others to have a diarrhoea from ptomaine poisoning or to vomit from it. But a cramp, he thought of it as a *calambre*, humiliates one- self especially when one is alone.

If the boy were here he could rub it for me and loosen it down from the forearm, he thought. But it will loosen up.

Then, with his right hand he felt the difference in the pull of the line before he saw the slant change in the water. Then, as he leaned against the line and slapped his left hand hard and fast against his thigh he saw the line slanting slowly upward.

"He's coming up," he said. "Come on hand. Please come on."

The line rose slowly and steadily and then the surface of the ocean bulged ahead of the boat and the fish came out. He came out unendingly and water poured from his sides. He was bright in the sun and his head and back were dark purple and in the sun the stripes on his sides showed wide and a light lavender. His sword was as long as a baseball bat and tapered like a rapier and he rose

his full length from the water and then re-entered it, smoothly, like a diver and the old man saw the great scythe-blade of his tail go under and the line commenced to race out.

"He is two feet longer than the skiff," the old man said. The line was going out fast but steadily and the fish was not panicked. The old man was trying with both hands to keep the line just inside of breaking strength. He knew that if he could not slow the fish with a steady pressure the fish could take out all the line and break it.

He is a great fish and I must convince him, he thought. I must never let him learn his strength nor what he could do if he made his run. If I were him I would put in everything now and go until something broke. But, thank God, they are not as intelligent as we who kill them; although they are more noble and more able.

The old man had seen many great fish. He had seen many that weighed more than a thousand pounds and he had caught two of that size in his life, but never alone. Now alone, and out of sight of land, he was fast to the biggest fish that he had ever seen and bigger than he had ever heard of, and his left hand was still as tight as the gripped claws of an eagle.

It will uncramp though, he thought. Surely it will uncramp to help my right hand. There are three things that are brothers: the fish and my two hands. It must uncramp. It is unworthy of it to be cramped. The fish had slowed again and was going at his usual pace.

I wonder why he jumped, the old man thought. He jumped almost as though to show me how big he was. I know now, anyway, he thought. I wish I could show him what sort of man I am. But then he would see the cramped hand. Let him think I am more man than I am and I will be so. I wish I was the fish, he thought, with everything he has against only my will and my intelligence.

He settled comfortably against the wood and took his suffering as it came and the fish swam steadily and the boat moved slowly through the dark water. There was a small sea rising with the wind

coming up from the east and at noon the old man's left hand was uncramped.

"Bad news for you, fish," he said and shifted the line over the sacks that covered his shoulders.

He was comfortable but suffering, although he did not admit the suffering at all.

"I am not religious," he said. "But I will say ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys that I should catch this fish, and I promise to make a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Cobre if I catch him. That is a promise."

He commenced to say his prayers mechanically. Sometimes he would be so tired that he could not remember the prayer and then he would say them fast so that they would come automatically. Hail Marys are easier to say than Our Fathers, he thought.

"Hail Mary full of Grace the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen." Then he added, "Blessed Virgin, pray for the death of this fish. Wonderful though he is."

With his prayers said, and feeling much better, but suffering exactly as much, and perhaps a little more, he leaned against the wood of the bow and began, mechanically, to work the fingers of his left hand.

The sun was hot now although the breeze was rising gently.

"I had better re-bait that little line out over the stern," he said. "If the fish decides to stay another night I will need to eat again and the water is low in the bottle. I don't think I can get anything but a dolphin here. But if I eat him fresh enough he won't be bad. I wish a flying fish would come on board tonight. But I have no light to attract them. A flying fish is excellent to eat raw and I would not have to cut him up. I must save all my strength now. Christ, I did not know he was so big."

"I'll kill him though," he said. "In all his greatness and his glory."

Although it is unjust, he thought. But I will show him what a man can do and what a man endures.

"I told the boy I was a strange old man," he said. "Now is when I must prove it."

The thousand times that he had proved it meant nothing. Now he was proving it again. Each time was a new time and he never thought about the past when he was doing it.

I wish he'd sleep and I could sleep and dream about the lions, he thought. Why are the lions the main thing that is left? Don't think, old man, he said to himself. Rest gently now against the wood and think of nothing. He is working. Work as little as you can.

It was getting into the afternoon and the boat still moved slowly and steadily. But there was an added drag now from the easterly breeze and the old man rode gently with the small sea and the hurt of the cord across his back came to him easily and smoothly.

Once in the afternoon the line started to rise again. But the fish only continued to swim at a slightly higher level. The sun was on the old man's left arm and shoulder and on his back. So he knew the fish had turned east of north.

Now that he had seen him once, he could picture the fish swimming in the water with his purple pectoral fins set wide as wings and the great erect tail slicing through the dark. I wonder how much he sees at that depth, the old man thought. His eye is huge and a horse, with much less eye, can see in the dark. Once I could see quite well in the dark. Not in the absolute dark. But almost as a cat sees.

The sun and his steady movement of his fingers had uncramped his left hand now completely and he began to shift more of the strain to it and he shrugged the muscles of his back to shift the hurt of the cord a little.

"If you're not tired, fish," he said aloud, "you must be very strange."

He felt very tired now and he knew the night would come soon

and he tried to think of other things. He thought of the Big Leagues, to him they were the *Gran Ligas*, and he knew that the Yankees of New York were playing the *Tigres* of Detroit.

This is the second day now that I do not know the result of the *juegoes* he thought. But I must have confidence and I must be worthy of the great DiMaggio who does all things perfectly even with the pain of the bone spur in his heel. What is a bone spur? he asked himself. *Un espuela de hueso*. We do not have them. Can it be as painful as the spur of a fighting cock in one's heel? I do not think I could endure that or the loss of the eye and of both eyes and continue to fight as the fighting cocks do. Man is not much beside the great birds and beasts. Still I would rather be that beast down there in the darkness of the sea.

"Unless sharks come," he said aloud. "If sharks come, God pity him and me."

Do you believe the great DiMaggio would stay with a fish as long as I will stay with this one? he thought. I am sure he would and more since he is young and strong. Also his father was a fisherman. But would the bone spur hurt him too much?

"I do not know," he said aloud. "I never had a bone spur."

As the sun set he remembered, to give himself more confidence, the time in the tavern at Casablanca when he had played the hand game with the great negro from Cienfuegos who was the strongest man on the docks. They had gone one day and one night with their elbows on a chalk line on the table and their forearms straight up and their hands gripped tight. Each one was trying to force the other's hand down onto the table. There was much betting and people went in and out of the room under the kerosene lights and he had looked at the arm and hand of the negro and at the negro's face. They changed the referees every four hours after the first eight so that the referees could sleep. Blood came out from under the fingernails of both his and the negro's hands and they looked each other in the eye and at their hands and forearms and the bettors

went in and out of the room and sat on high chairs against the wall and watched. The walls were painted bright blue and were of wood and the lamps threw their shadows against them. The negro's shadow was huge and it moved on the wall as the breeze moved the lamps.

The odds would change back and forth all night and they fed the negro rum and lighted cigarettes for him. Then the negro, after the rum, would try for a tremendous effort and once he had the old man, who was not an old man then but was Santiago El *Campeón*, nearly three inches off balance. But the old man had raised his hand up to dead even again. He was sure then that he had the negro, who was a fine man and a great athlete, beaten. And at daylight when the bettors were asking that it be called a draw and the referee was shaking his head, he had unleashed his effort and forced the hand of the negro down and down until it rested on the wood. The match had started on a Sunday morning and ended on a Monday morning. Many of the bettors had asked for a draw because they had to go to work on the docks loading sacks of sugar or at the Havana Coal Company. Otherwise everyone would have wanted it to go to a finish. But he had finished it anyway and before anyone had to go to work.

For a long time after that everyone had called him The Champion and there had been a return match in the spring. But not much money was bet and he had won it quite easily since he had broken the confidence of the negro from Cienfuegos in the first match. After that he had a few matches and then no more. He decided that he could beat anyone if he wanted to badly enough and he decided that it was bad for his right hand for fishing. He had tried a few practice matches with his left hand. But his left hand had always been a traitor and would not do what he called on it to do and he did not trust it.

The sun will bake it out well now, he thought. It should not cramp on me again unless it gets too cold in the night. I wonder

what this night will bring.

An airplane passed overhead on its course to Miami and he watched its shadow scaring up the schools of flying fish.

"With so much flying fish there should be dolphin," he said, and leaned back on the line to see if it was possible to gain any on his fish. But he could not and it stayed at the hardness and water-drop shivering that preceded breaking. The boat moved ahead slowly and he watched the airplane until he could no longer see it.

It must be very strange in an airplane, he thought. I wonder what the sea looks like from that height? They should be able to see the fish well if they do not fly too high. I would like to fly very slowly at two hundred fathoms high and see the fish from above. In the turtle boats I was in the cross-trees of the mast-head and even at that height I saw much. The dolphin look greener from there and you can see their stripes and their purple spots and you can see all of the school as they swim. Why is it that all the fast-moving fish of the dark current have purple backs and usually purple stripes or spots? The dolphin looks green of course because he is really golden. But when he comes to feed, truly hungry, purple stripes show on his sides as on a marlin. Can it be anger, or the greater speed he makes that brings them out?

Just before it was dark, as they passed a great island of Sargasso weed that heaved and swung in the light sea as though the ocean were making love with something under a yellow blanket, his small line was taken by a dolphin. He saw it first when it jumped in the air true gold in the last of the sun and bending and flapping wildly in the air. It jumped again and again in the acrobatics of its fear and he worked his way back to the stern and crouching and holding the big line with his right hand and arm, he pulled the dolphin in with his left hand, stepping on the gained line each time with his bare left foot. When the fish was at the stern, plunging and cutting from side to side in desperation, the old man leaned over the stern and lifted the burnished gold fish with its purple spots over the stern. Its

jaws were working convulsively in' quick bites against the hook and it pounded the bottom of the skiff with its long flat body, its tail and its head until he clubbed it across the shining golden head until it shivered and was still.

The old man unhooked the fish, re-baited the line with another sardine and tossed it over. Then he worked his way slowly back to the bow. He washed his left hand and wiped it on his trousers. Then he shifted the heavy line from his right hand to his left and washed his right hand in the sea while he watched the sun go into the ocean and the slant of the big cord.

"He hasn't changed at all," he said. But watching the movement of the water against his hand he noted that it was perceptibly slower.

"I'll lash the two oars, together across the stern and that will slow him in the night," he said. "He's good for the night and so am I."

It would be better to gut the dolphin a little later to save the blood in the meat, he thought. I can do that a little later and lash the oars to make a drag at the same time. I had better keep the fish quiet now and not disturb him too much at sunset. The setting of the sun is a difficult time for all fish.

He let his hand dry in the air then grasped the line with it and eased himself as much as he could and allowed himself to be pulled forward against the wood so that the boat took the strain as much, or more, than he did.

I'm learning how to do it, he thought. This part of it anyway. Then too, remember he hasn't eaten since he took the bait and he is huge and needs much food. I have eaten the whole bonito. Tomorrow I will eat the dolphin. He called it *dorado*. Perhaps I should eat some of it when I clean it. It will be harder to eat than the bonito. But, then, nothing is easy.

"How do you feel, fish?" he asked aloud. "I feel good and my left hand is better and I have food for a night and a day. Pull the

boat, fish."

He did not truly feel good because the pain from the cord across his back had almost passed pain and gone into a dullness that he mistrusted. But I have had worse things than that, he thought. My hand is only cut a little and the cramp is gone from the other. My legs are all right. Also now I have gained on him in the question of sustenance.

It was dark now as it becomes dark quickly after the sun sets in September. He lay against the worn wood of the bow and rested all that he could. The first stars were out. He did not know the name of Rigel but he saw it and knew soon they would all be out and he would have all his distant friends.

"The fish is my friend too," he said aloud. "I have never seen or heard of such a fish. But I must kill him. I am glad we do not have to try to kill the stars."

Imagine if each day a man must try to kill the moon, he thought. The moon runs away. But imagine if a man each day should have to try to kill the sun? We were born lucky, he thought.

Then he was sorry for the great fish that had nothing to eat and his determination to kill him never relaxed in his sorrow for him. How many people will he feed, he thought. But are they worthy to eat him? No, of course not. There is no one worthy of eating him from the manner of his behaviour and his great dignity.

I do not understand these things, he thought. But it is good that we do not have to try to kill the sun or the moon or the stars. It is enough to live on the sea and kill our true brothers.

Now, he thought, I must think about the drag. It has its perils and its merits. I may lose so much line that I will lose him, if he makes his effort and the drag made by the oars is in place and the boat loses all her lightness. Her lightness prolongs both our suffering but it is my safety since he has great speed that he has never yet employed. No matter what passes I must gut the dolphin so he does not spoil and eat some of him to be strong.

Now I will rest an hour more and feel that he is solid and steady before I move back to the stern to do the work and make the decision. In the meantime I can see how he acts and if he shows any changes. The oars are a good trick; but it has reached the time to play for safety. He is much fish still and I saw that the hook was in the corner of his mouth and he has kept his mouth tight shut. The punishment of the hook is nothing. The punishment of hunger, and that he is against something that he does not comprehend, is everything. Rest now, old man, and let him work until your next duty comes.

He rested for what he believed to be two hours. The moon did not rise now until late and he had no way of judging the time. Nor was he really resting except comparatively. He was still bearing the pull of the fish across his shoulders but he placed his left hand on the gunwale of the bow and confided more and more of the resistance to the fish to the skiff itself.

How simple it would be if I could make the line fast, he thought. But with one small lurch he could break it. I must cushion the pull of the line with my body and at all times be ready to give line with both hands.

"But you have not slept yet, old man," he said aloud.

"It is half a day and a night and now another day and you have not slept. You must devise a way so that you sleep a little if he is quiet and steady. If you do not sleep you might become unclear in the head."

I'm clear enough in the head, he thought. Too clear. I am as clear as the stars that are my brothers. Still I must sleep. They sleep and the moon and the sun sleep and even the ocean sleeps sometimes on certain days when there is no current and a flat calm.

But remember to sleep, he thought. Make yourself do it and devise some simple and sure way about the lines. Now go back and prepare the dolphin. It is too dangerous to rig the oars as a drag if you must sleep.

I could go without sleeping, he told himself. But it would be too dangerous.

He started to work his way back to the stern on his hands and knees, being careful not to jerk against the fish. He may be half asleep himself, he thought. But I do not want him to rest. He must pull until he dies.

Back in the stern he turned so that his left hand held the strain of the line across his shoulders and drew his knife from its sheath with his right hand. The stars were bright now and he saw the dolphin clearly and he pushed the blade of his knife into his head and drew him out from under the stern. He put one of his feet on the fish and slit him quickly from the vent up to the tip of his lower jaw. Then he put his knife down and gutted him with his right hand, scooping him clean and pulling the gills clear. He felt the maw heavy and slippery in his hands and he slit it open. There were two flying fish inside. They were fresh and hard and he laid them side by side and dropped the guts and the gills over the stern. They sank leaving a trail of phosphorescence in the water. The dolphin was cold and a leprous gray-white now in the starlight and the old man skinned one side of him while he held his right foot on the fish's head. Then he turned him over and skinned the other side and cut each side off from the head down to the tail.

He slid the carcass overboard and looked to see if there was any swirl in the water. But there was only the light of its slow descent. He turned then and placed the two flying fish inside the two fillets of fish and putting his knife back in its sheath, he worked his way slowly back to the bow. His back was bent with the weight of the line across it and he carried the fish in his right hand.

Back in the bow he laid the two fillets of fish out on the wood with the flying fish beside them. After that he settled the line across his shoulders in a new place and held it again with his left hand resting on the gun-wale. Then he leaned over the side and washed the flying fish in the water, noting the speed of the water against

his hand. His hand was phosphorescent from skinning the fish and he watched the flow of the water against it. The flow was less strong and as he rubbed the side of his hand against the planking of the skiff, particles of phosphorus floated off and drifted slowly astern.

"He is tiring or he is resting," the old man said. "Now let me get through the eating of this dolphin and get some rest and a little sleep."

Under the stars and with the night colder all the time he ate half of one of the dolphin fillets and one of the flying fish, gutted and with its head cut off.

"What an excellent fish dolphin is to eat cooked," he said. "And what a miserable fish raw. I will never go in a boat again without salt or limes."

If I had brains I would have splashed water on the bow all day and drying, it would have made salt, he thought. But then I did not hook the dolphin until almost sunset. Still it was a lack of preparation. But I have chewed it all well and I am not nauseated.

The sky was clouding over to the east and one after another the stars he knew were gone. It looked now as though he were moving into a great canyon of clouds and the wind had dropped.

"There will be bad weather in three or four days," he said. "But not tonight and not tomorrow. Rig now to get some sleep, old man, while the fish is calm and steady."

He held the line tight in his right hand and then pushed his thigh against his right hand as he leaned all his weight against the wood of the bow. Then he passed the line a little lower on his shoulders and braced his left hand on it.

My right hand can hold it as long as it is braced, he thought. If it relaxes in sleep my left hand will wake me as the line goes out. It is hard on the right hand. But he is used to punishment. Even if I sleep twenty minutes or a half an hour it is good. He lay forward cramping himself against the line with all of his body, putting all

his weight onto his right hand, and he was asleep.

He did not dream of the lions but instead of a vast school of porpoises that stretched for eight or ten miles and it was in the time of their mating and they would leap high into the air and return into the same hole they had made in the water when they leaped.

Then he dreamed that he was in the village on his bed and there was a norther and he was very cold and his right arm was asleep because his head had rested on it instead of a pillow.

After that he began to dream of the long yellow beach and he saw the first of the lions come down onto it in the early dark and then the other lions came and he rested his chin on the wood of the bows where the ship lay anchored with the evening off-shore breeze and he waited to see if there would be more lions and he was happy.

The moon had been up for a long time but he slept on and the fish pulled on steadily and the boat moved into the tunnel of clouds.

He woke with the jerk of his right fist corning up against his face and the line burning out through his right hand. He had no feeling of his left hand but he braked all he could with his right and the line rushed out. Finally his left hand found the line and he leaned back against the line and now it burned his back and his left hand, and his left hand was taking all the strain and cutting badly. He looked back at the coils of line and they were feeding smoothly. Just then the fish jumped making a great bursting of the ocean and then a heavy fall. Then he jumped again and again and the boat was going fast although line was still racing out and the old man was raising the strain to breaking point and raising it to breaking point again and again. He had been pulled down tight onto the bow and his face was in the cut slice of dolphin and he could not move.

This is what we waited for, he thought. So now let us take it.

Make him pay for the line, he thought. Make him pay for it.

He could not see the fish's jumps but only heard the breaking of

the ocean and the heavy splash as he fell. The speed of the line was cutting his hands badly but he had always known this would happen and he tried to keep the cutting across the calloused parts and not let the line slip into the palm nor cut the fingers.

If the boy was here he would wet the coils of line, he thought. Yes. If the boy were here. If the boy were here.

The line went out and out and out but it was slowing now and he was making the fish earn each inch of it. Now he got his head up from the wood and out of the slice of fish that his cheek had crushed. Then he was on his knees and then he rose slowly to his feet. He was ceding line but more slowly all the time. He worked back to where he could feel with his foot the coils of line that he could not see. There was plenty of line still and now the fish had to pull the friction of all that new line through the water.

Yes, he thought. And now he has jumped more than a dozen times and filled the sacks along his back with air and he cannot go down deep to die where I cannot bring him up. He will start circling soon and then I must work on him. I wonder what started him so suddenly? Could it have been hunger that made him desperate, or was he frightened by something in the night? Maybe he suddenly felt fear. But he was such a calm, strong fish and he seemed so fearless and so confident. It is strange.

"You better be fearless and confident yourself, old man," he said. "You're holding him again but you cannot get line. But soon he has to circle."

The old man held him with his left hand and his shoulders now and stooped down and scooped up water in his right hand to get the crushed dolphin flesh off of his face. He was afraid that it might nauseate him and he would vomit and lose his strength. When his face was cleaned he washed his right hand in the water over the side and then let it stay in the salt water while he watched the first light come before the sunrise. He's headed almost east, he thought. That means he is tired and going with the current. Soon he will

have to circle. Then our true work begins.

After he judged that his right hand had been in the water long enough he took it out and looked at it.

"It is not bad," he said. "And pain does not matter to a man."

He took hold of the line carefully so that it did not fit into any of the fresh line cuts and shifted his weight so that he could put his left hand into the sea on the other side of the skiff.

"You did not do so badly for something worthless," he said to his left hand. "But there was a moment when I could not find you."

Why was I not born with two good hands? he thought. Perhaps it was my fault in not training that one properly. But God knows he has had enough chances to learn. He did not do so badly in the night, though, and he has only cramped once. If he cramps again let the line cut him off.

When he thought that he knew that he was not being clear-headed and he thought he should chew some more of the dolphin. But I can't, he told himself. It is better to be light-headed than to lose your strength from nausea. And I know I cannot keep it if I eat it since my face was in it. I will keep it for an emergency until it goes bad. But it is too late to try for strength now through nourishment. You're stupid, he told himself. Eat the other flying fish.

It was there, cleaned and ready, and he picked it up with his left hand and ate it chewing the bones carefully and eating all of it down to the tail.

It has more nourishment than almost any fish, he thought. At least the kind of strength that I need. Now I have done what I can, he thought. Let him begin to circle and let the fight come.

The sun was rising for the third time since he had put to sea when the fish started to circle.

He could not see by the slant of the line that the fish was circling. It was too early for that. He just felt a faint slackening of the pressure of the line and be commenced to pull on it gently with

his right hand. It tightened, as always, but just when he reached the point where it would break, line began to come in. He slipped his shoulders and head from under the line and began to pull in line steadily and gently. He used both of his hands in a swinging motion and tried to do the pulling as much as he could with his body and his legs. His old legs and shoulders pivoted with the swinging of the pulling.

"It is a very big circle," he said. "But he is circling."

Then the line would not come in any more and he held it until he saw the drops jumping from it in the sun. Then it started out and the old man knelt down and let it go grudgingly back into the dark water.

"He is making the far part of his circle now," he said. I must hold all I can, he thought. The strain will shorten his circle each time. Perhaps in an hour I will see him. Now I must convince him and then I must kill him.

But the fish kept on circling slowly and the old man was wet with sweat and tired deep into his bones two hours later. But the circles were much shorter now and from the way the line slanted he could tell the fish had risen steadily while he swam.

For an hour the old man had been seeing black spots before his eyes and the sweat salted his eyes and salted the cut over his eye and on his forehead. He was not afraid of the black spots. They were normal at the tension that he was pulling on the line. Twice, though, he had felt faint and dizzy and that had worried him.

"I could not fail myself and die on a fish like this," he said. "Now that I have him coming so beautifully, God help me endure. I'll say a hundred Our Fathers and a hundred Hail Marys. But I cannot say them now."

Consider them said, he thought. I'll say them later. Just then he felt a sudden banging and jerking on the line he held with his two hands. It was sharp and hard-feeling and heavy.

He is hitting the wire leader with his spear, he thought. That

was bound to come. He had to do that. It made him jump through and I would rather he stayed circling now. The jumps were necessary for him to take air. But after that each one can widen the opening of the hook wound and he can throw the hook.

"Don't jump, fish," he said. "Don't jump."

The fish hit the wire several times more and each time he shook his head the old man gave up a little line.

I must hold his pain where it is, he thought. Mine does not matter. I can control mine. But his pain could drive him mad.

After a while the fish stopped beating at the wire and started circling slowly again. The old man was gaining line steadily now. But he felt faint again. He lifted some sea water with his left hand and put it on his head. Then he put more on and rubbed the back of his neck.

"I have no cramps," he said. "He'll be up soon and I can last. You have to last. Don't even speak of it."

He kneeled against the bow and, for a moment, slipped the line over his back again. I'll rest now while he goes out on the circle and then stand up and work on him when he comes in, he decided.

It was a great temptation to rest in the bow and let the fish make one circle by himself without recovering any line. But when the strain showed the fish had turned to come toward the boat, the old man rose to his feet and started the pivoting and the weaving pulling that brought in all the line he gained.

I'm tireder than I have ever been, he thought, and now the trade wind is rising. But that will be good to take him in with. I need that badly.

"I'll rest on the next turn as he goes out," he said. "I feel much better. Then in two or three turns more I will have him."

His straw hat was far on the back of his head and he sank down into the bow with the pull of the line as he felt the fish turn.

You work now, fish, he thought. I'll take you at the turn.

The sea had risen considerably. But it was a fair-weather breeze

and he had to have it to get home.

"I'll just steer south and west," he said. "A man is never lost at sea and it is a long island."

It was on the third turn that he saw the fish first. He saw him first as a dark shadow that took so long to pass under the boat that he could not believe its length.

"No," he said, "He can't be that big."

But he was that big and at the end of this circle he came to the surface only thirty yards away and the man saw his tail out of water. It was higher than a big scythe blade and a very pale lavender above the dark blue water. It raked back and as the fish swam just below the surface the old man could see his huge bulk and the purple stripes that banded him. His dorsal fin was down and his huge pectorals were spread wide.

On this circle the old man could see the fish's eye and the two gray sucking fish that swam around him. Sometimes they attached themselves to him. Sometimes they darted off. Sometimes they would swim easily in his shadow. They were each over three feet long and when they swam fast they lashed their whole bodies like eels.

The old man was sweating now but from something else besides the sun. On each calm placid turn the fish made he was gaining line and he was sure that in two turns more he would have a chance to get the harpoon in.

But I must get him close, close, close, he thought. I mustn't try for the head. I must get the heart.

"Be calm and strong, old man," he said.

On the next circle the fish's back was out but he was a little too far from the boat. On the next circle he was still too far away but he was higher out of water and the old man was sure that by gaining some more line he could have him alongside.

He had rigged his harpoon long before and its coil of light rope was in a round basket and the end was made fast to the bitt in the

bow.

The fish was coming in on his circle now calm and beautiful looking and only his great tail moving. The old man pulled on him all that he could to bring him closer. For just a moment the fish turned a little on his side. Then he straightened himself and began another circle.

"I moved him," the old man said. "I moved him then."

He felt faint again now but he held on the great fish all the strain that he could. I moved him, he thought. Maybe this time I can get him over. Pull, hands, he thought. Hold up, legs. Last for me, head. Last for me. You never went. This time I'll pull him over.

But when he put all of his effort on, starting it well out before the fish came alongside and pulling with all his strength, the fish pulled part way over and then righted himself and swam away.

"Fish," the old man said. "Fish, you are going to have to die anyway. Do you have to kill me too?"

That way nothing is accomplished, he thought. His mouth was too dry to speak but he could not reach for the water now. I must get him alongside this time, he thought. I am not good for many more turns. Yes you are, he told himself. You're good for ever.

On the next turn, he nearly had him. But again the fish righted himself and swam slowly away.

You are killing me fish, the old man thought. But you have a right to. Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who.

Now you are getting confused in the head, he thought. You must keep your head clear. Keep your head clear and know how to suffer like a man. Or a fish, he thought.

"Clear up, head," he said in a voice he could hardly hear. "Clear up."

Twice more it was the same on the turns.

I do not know, the old man thought. He had been on the point of

feeling himself go each time. I do not know. But I will try it once more.

He tried it once more and he felt himself going when he turned the fish. The fish righted himself and swam off again slowly with the great tail weaving in the air.

I'll try it again, the old man promised, although his hands were mushy now and he could only see well in flashes.

He tried it again and it was the same. So he thought, and he felt himself going before he started; I will try it once again.

He took all his pain and what was left of his strength and his long gone pride and he put it against the fish's agony and the fish came over onto his side and swam gently on his side, his bill almost touching the planking of the skiff and started to pass the boat, long, deep, wide, silver and barred with purple and interminable in the water.

The old man dropped the line and put his foot on it and lifted the harpoon as high as he could and drove it down with all his strength, and more strength he had just summoned, into the fish's side just behind the great chest fin that rose high in the air to the altitude of the man's chest. He felt the iron go in and he leaned on it and drove it further and then pushed all his weight after it.

Then the fish came alive, with his death in him, and rose high out of the water showing all his great length and width and all his power and his beauty. He seemed to hang in the air above the old man in the skiff. Then he fell into the water with a crash that sent spray over the old man and over all of the skiff.

The old man felt faint and sick and he could not see well. But he cleared the harpoon line and let it run slowly through his raw hands and, when he could see, he saw the fish was on his back with his silver belly up. The shaft of the harpoon was projecting at an angle from the fish's shoulder and the sea was discolouring with the red of the blood from his heart. First it was dark as a shoal in the blue water that was more than a mile deep. Then it spread like a cloud.

The fish was silvery and still and floated with the waves.

The old man looked carefully in the glimpse of vision that he had. Then he took two turns of the harpoon line around the bitt in the bow and laid his head on his hands.

"Keep my head clear," he said against the wood of the bow. "I am a tired old man. But I have killed this fish which is my brother and now I must do the slave work."

Now I must prepare the nooses and the rope to lash him alongside, he thought. Even if we were two and swamped her to load him and bailed her out, this skiff would never hold him. I must prepare everything, then bring him in and lash him well and step the mast and set sail for home.

He started to pull the fish in to have him alongside so that he could pass a line through his gills and out his mouth and make his head fast alongside the bow. I want to see him, he thought, and to touch and to feel him. He is my fortune, he thought. But that is not why I wish to feel him. I think I felt his heart, he thought. When I pushed on the harpoon shaft the second time. Bring him in now and make him fast and get the noose around his tail and another around his middle to bind him to the skiff.

"Get to work, old man," he said. He took a very small drink of the water. "There is very much slave work to be done now that the fight is over."

He looked up at the sky and then out to his fish. He looked at the sun carefully. It is not much more than noon, he thought. And the trade wind is rising. The lines all mean nothing now. The boy and I will splice them when we are home.

"Come on, fish," he said. But the fish did not come.

Instead he lay there wallowing now in the seas and the old man pulled the skiff up onto him.

When he was even with him and had the fish's head against the bow he could not believe his size. But he untied the harpoon rope from the bitt, passed it through the fish's gills and out his jaws,

made a turn around his sword then passed the rope through the other gill, made another turn around the bill and knotted the double rope and made it fast to the bitt in the bow. He cut the rope then and went astern to noose the tail. The fish had turned silver from his original purple and silver, and the stripes showed the same pale violet colour as his tail. They were wider than a man's hand with his fingers spread and the fish's eye looked as detached as the mirrors in a periscope or as a saint in a procession.

"It was the only way to kill him," the old man said.

He was feeling better since the water and he knew he would not go away and his head was clear. He's over fifteen hundred pounds the way he is, he thought. Maybe much more. If he dresses out two-thirds of that at thirty cents a pound?

"I need a pencil for that," he said. "My head is not that clear. But I think the great DiMaggio would be proud of me today. I had no bone spurs. But the hands and the back hurt truly." I wonder what a bone spur is, he thought. Maybe we have them without knowing of it.

He made the fish fast to bow and stern and to the middle thwart. He was so big it was like lashing a much bigger skiff alongside. He cut a piece of line and tied the fish's lower jaw against his bill so his mouth would not open and they would sail as cleanly as possible. Then he stepped the mast and, with the stick that was his gaff and with his boom rigged, the patched sail drew, the boat began to move, and half lying in the stern he sailed south-west.

He did not need a compass to tell him where south-west was. He only needed the feel of the trade wind and the drawing of the sail. I better put a small line out with a spoon on it and try and get something to eat and drink for the moisture. But he could not find a spoon and his sardines were rotten. So he hooked a patch of yellow Gulf weed with the gaff as they passed and shook it so that the small shrimps that were in it fell onto the planking of the skiff. There were more than a dozen of them and they jumped and kicked

like sand fleas. The old man pinched their heads off with his thumb and forefinger and ate them chewing up the shells and the tails. They were very tiny but he knew they were nourishing and they tasted good.

The old man still had two drinks of water in the bottle and he used half of one after he had eaten the shrimps. The skiff was sailing well considering the handicaps and he steered with the tiller under his arm. He could see the fish and he had only to look at his hands and feel his back against the stern to know that this had truly happened and was not a dream. At one time when he was feeling so badly toward the end, he had thought perhaps it was a dream. Then when he had seen the fish come out of the water and hang motionless in the sky before he fell, he was sure there was some great strangeness and he could not believe it. Then he could not see well, although now he saw as well as ever.

Now he knew there was the fish and his hands and back were no dream. The hands cure quickly, he thought. I bled them clean and the salt water will heal them. The dark water of the true gulf is the greatest healer that there is. All I must do is keep the head clear. The hands have done their work and we sail well. With his mouth shut and his tail straight up and down we sail like brothers. Then his head started to become a little unclear and he thought, is he bringing me in or am I bringing him in? If I were towing him behind there would be no question. Nor if the fish were in the skiff, with all dignity gone, there would be no question either. But they were sailing together lashed side by side and the old man thought, let him bring me in if it pleases him. I am only better than him through trickery and he meant me no harm.

They sailed well and the old man soaked his hands in the salt water and tried to keep his head clear. There were high cumulus clouds and enough cirrus above them so that the old man knew the breeze would last all night. The old man looked at the fish constantly to make sure it was true. It was an hour before the first

shark hit him.

The shark was not an accident. He had come up from deep down in the water as the dark cloud of blood had settled and dispersed in the mile deep sea. He had come up so fast and absolutely without caution that he broke the surface of the blue water and was in the sun. Then he fell back into the sea and picked up the scent and started swimming on the course the skiff and the fish had taken.

Sometimes he lost the scent. But he would pick it up again, or have just a trace of it, and he swam fast and hard on the course. He was a very big Mako shark built to swim as fast as the fastest fish in the sea and everything about him was beautiful except his jaws. His back was as blue as a swordfish's and his belly was silver and his hide was smooth and handsome. He was built as a swordfish except for his huge jaws which were tight shut now as he swam fast, just under the surface with his high dorsal fin knifing through the water without wavering. Inside the closed double lip of his jaws all of his eight rows of teeth were slanted inwards. They were not the ordinary pyramid-shaped teeth of most sharks. They were shaped like a man's fingers when they are crisped like claws. They were nearly as long as the fingers of the old man and they had razor-sharp cutting edges on both sides. This was a fish built to feed on all the fishes in the sea, that were so fast and strong and well armed that they had no other enemy. Now he speeded up as he smelled the fresher scent and his blue dorsal fin cut the water.

When the old man saw him coming he knew that this was a shark that had no fear at all and would do exactly what he wished. He prepared the harpoon and made the rope fast while he watched the shark come on. The rope was short as it lacked what he had cut away to lash the fish.

The old man's head was clear and good now and he was full of resolution but he had little hope. It was too good to last, he thought. He took one look at the great fish as he watched the shark close in. It might as well have been a dream, he thought. I cannot

keep him from hitting me but maybe I can get him. *Dentuso,* he thought. Bad luck to your mother.

The shark closed fast astern and when he hit the fish the old man saw his mouth open and his strange eyes and the clicking chop of the teeth as he drove forward in the meat just above the tail. The shark's head was out of water and his back was coming out and the old man could hear the noise of skin and flesh ripping on the big fish when he rammed the harpoon down onto the shark's head at a spot where the line between his eyes intersected with the line that ran straight back from his nose. There were no such lines. There was only the heavy sharp blue head and the big eyes and the clicking, thrusting all-swallowing jaws. But that was the location of the brain and the old man hit it. He hit it with his blood mushed hands driving a good harpoon with all his strength. He hit it without hope but with resolution and complete malignancy.

The shark swung over and the old man saw his eye was not alive and then he swung over once again, wrapping himself in two loops of the rope. The old man knew that he was dead but the shark would not accept it. Then, on his back, with his tail lashing and his jaws clicking, the shark plowed over the water as a speedboat does. The water was white where his tail beat it and three-quarters of his body was clear above the water when the rope came taut, shivered, and then snapped. The shark lay quietly for a little while on the surface and the old man watched him. Then he went down very slowly.

"He took about forty pounds," the old' man said aloud. He took my harpoon too and all the rope, he thought, and now my fish bleeds again and there will be others.

He did not like to look at the fish anymore since he had been, mutilated. When the fish had been hit it was as though he himself were hit.

But I killed the shark that hit my fish, he thought.

And he was the biggest *dentuso* that I have ever seen. And God

knows that I have seen big ones.

It was too good to last, he thought. I wish it had been a dream now and that I had never hooked the fish and was alone in bed on the newspapers.

"But man is not made for defeat," he said. "A man can be destroyed but not defeated." I am sorry that I killed the fish though, he thought. Now the bad time is coming and I do not even have the harpoon. The *dentuso* is cruel and able and strong and intelligent. But I was more intelligent than he was. Perhaps not, he thought. Perhaps I was only better armed.

"Don't think, old man," he said aloud. "Sail on this course and take it when it comes."

But I must think, he thought. Because it is all I have left. That and baseball. I wonder how the great DiMaggio would have liked the way I hit him in the brain? It was no great thing, he thought. Any man could do it. But do you think my hands were as great a handicap as the bone spurs? I cannot know. I never had anything wrong with my heel except the time the sting ray stung it when I stepped on him when swimming and paralyzed the lower leg and made the unbearable pain.

"Think about something cheerful, old man," he said. "Every minute now you are closer to home. You sail lighter for the loss of forty pounds."

He knew quite well the pattern of what could happen when he reached the inner part of the current. But there was nothing to be done now.

"Yes there is," he said aloud. "I can lash my knife to the butt of one of the oars."

So he did that with the tiller under his arm and the sheet of the sail under his foot.

"Now," he said. "I am still an old man. But I am not unarmed."

The breeze was fresh now and he sailed on well. He watched only the forward part of the fish and some of his hope returned.

It is silly not to hope, he thought. Besides I believe it is a sin. Do not think about sin, he thought. There are enough problems now without sin. Also I have no understanding of it.

I have no understanding of it and I am not sure that I believe in it. Perhaps it was a sin to kill the fish. I suppose it was even though I did it to keep me alive and feed many people. But then everything is a sin. Do not think about sin. It is much too late for that and there are people who are paid to do it. Let them think about it. You were born to be a fisherman as the fish was born to be a fish. San Pedro was a fisherman as was the father of the great DiMaggio.

But he liked to think about all things that he was involved in and since there was nothing to read and he did not have a radio, he thought much and he kept on thinking about sin. You did not kill the fish only to keep alive and to sell for food, he thought. You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman. You loved him when he was alive and you loved him after. If you love him, it is not a sin to kill him. Or is it more?

"You think too much, old man," he said aloud.

But you enjoyed killing the *dentuso,* he thought. He lives on the live fish as you do. He is not a scavenger nor just a moving appetite as some sharks are. He is beautiful and noble and knows no fear of anything.

"I killed him in self-defense," the old man said aloud. "And I killed him well."

Besides, he thought, everything kills everything else in some way. Fishing kills me exactly as it keeps me alive. The boy keeps me alive, he thought. I must not deceive myself too much.

He leaned over the side and pulled loose a piece of the meat of the fish where the shark had cut him. He chewed it and noted its quality and its good taste. It was firm and juicy, like meat, but it was not red. There was no stringiness in it and he knew that it would bring the highest price in the market. But there was no way to keep its scent out of the water and the old man knew that a very

bad time was corning.

The breeze was steady. It had backed a little further into the north-east and he knew that meant that it would not fall off. The old man looked ahead of him but he could see no sails nor could he see the hull nor the smoke of any ship. There were only the flying fish that went up from his bow sailing away to either side and the yellow patches of Gulf weed. He could not even see a bird.

He had sailed for two hours, resting in the stern and sometimes chewing a bit of the meat from the marlin, trying to rest and to be strong, when he saw the first of the two sharks.

"*Ay*," he said aloud. There is no translation for this word and perhaps it is just a noise such as a man might make, involuntarily, feeling the nail go through his hands and into the wood.

"*Galanos*," he said aloud. He had seen the second fin now corning up behind the first and had identified them as shovel-nosed sharks by the brown, triangular fin and the sweeping movements of the tail. They had the scent and were excited and in the stupidity of their great hunger they were losing and finding the scent in their excitement. But they were closing all the time.

The old man made the sheet fast and jammed the tiller. Then he took up the oar with the knife lashed to it. He lifted it as lightly as he could because his hands rebelled at the pain. Then he opened and closed them on it lightly to loosen them, He closed them firmly so they would take the pain now and would not flinch and watched the sharks come. He could see their wide, flattened, shovel-pointed heads now and their white-tipped wide pectoral fins. They were hateful sharks, bad smelling, scavengers as well as killers, and when they were hungry they would bite at an oar or the rudder of a boat. It was these sharks that would cut the turtles' legs and flippers off when the turtles were asleep on the surface, and they would hit a man in the water, if they were hungry, even if the man had no smell of fish blood nor of fish slime on him.

"Ay," the old man said. "*Galanos*. Come on *galanos*."

They came. But they did not come as the Mako had come. One turned and went out of sight under the skiff and the old man could feel the skiff shake as he jerked and pulled on the fish. The other watched the old man with his slitted yellow eyes and then came in fast with his half circle of jaws wide to hit the fish where he had already been bitten. The line showed clearly on the top of his brown head and back where the brain joined the spinal cord and the old man drove the knife on the oar into the juncture, withdrew it, and drove it in again into the shark's yellow cat-like eyes. The shark let go of the fish and slid down, swallowing what he had taken as he died.

The skiff was still shaking with the destruction the other shark was doing to the fish and the old man let go the sheet so that the skiff would swing broadside and bring the shark out from under. When he saw the shark he leaned over the side and punched at him. He hit only meat and the hide was set hard and he barely got the knife in. The blow hurt not only his hands but his shoulder too. But the shark came up fast with his head out and the old man hit him squarely in the center of his flat-topped head as his nose came out of water and lay against the fish. The old man withdrew the blade and punched the shark exactly in the same spot again. He still hung to the fish with his jaws hooked and the old man stabbed him in his left eye. The shark still hung there.

"No?" the old man said and he drove the blade between the vertebrae and the brain. It was an easy shot now and he felt the cartilage sever. The old man reversed the oar and put the blade between the shark's jaws to open them. He twisted the blade and as the shark slid loose he said, "Go on, *galano.* Slide down a mile deep. Go see your friend, or maybe it's your mother."

The old man wiped the blade of his knife and laid down the oar. Then he found the sheet and the sail filled and he brought the skiff onto her course.

"They must have taken a quarter of him and of the best meat,"

he said aloud. “I wish it were a dream and that I had never hooked him. I’m sorry about it, fish. It makes everything wrong.” He stopped and he did not want to look at the fish now. Drained of blood and awash he looked the colour of the silver backing of a mirror and his stripes still showed.

“I shouldn’t have gone out so far, fish,” he said. “Neither for you nor for me. I’m sorry, fish.”

Now, he said to himself. Look to the lashing on the knife and see if it has been cut. Then get your hand in order because there still is more to come.

“I wish I had a stone for the knife,” the old man said after he had checked the lashing on the oar butt. “I should have brought a stone.” You should have brought many things, he thought. But you did not bring them, old man. Now is no time to think of what you do not have. Think of what you can do with what there is.

“You give me much good counsel,” he said aloud. “I’m tired of it.”

He held the tiller under his arm and soaked both his hands in the water as the skiff drove forward.

“God knows how much that last one took,” he said. “But she’s much lighter now.” He did not want to think of the mutilated underside of the fish. He knew that each of the jerking bumps of the shark had been meat torn away and that the fish now made a trail for all sharks as wide as a highway through the sea.

He was a fish to keep a man all winter, he thought. Don’t think of that. Just rest and try to get your hands in shape to defend what is left of him. The blood smell from my hands means nothing now with all that scent in the water. Besides they do not bleed much. There is nothing cut that means anything. The bleeding may keep the left from cramping.

What can I think of now? he thought. Nothing. I must think of nothing and wait for the next ones. I wish it had really been a dream, he thought. But who knows? It might have turned out well.

The next shark that came was a single shovelnose. He came like a pig to the trough if a pig had a mouth so wide that you could put your head in it. The old man let him hit the fish and then drove the knife on the oar down into his brain. But the shark jerked backwards as he rolled and the knife blade snapped.

The old man settled himself to steer. He did not even watch the big shark sinking slowly in the water, showing first life-size, then small, then tiny. That always fascinated the old man. But he did not even watch it now.

"I have the gaff now," he said. "But it will do no good. I have the two oars and the tiller and the short club."

Now they have beaten me, he thought. I am too old to club sharks to death. But I will try it as long as I have the oars and the short club and the tiller.

He put his hands in the water again to soak them. It was getting late in the afternoon and he saw nothing but the sea and the sky. There was more wind in the sky than there had been, and soon he hoped that he would see land.

"You're tired, old man," he said. "You're tired inside."

The sharks did not hit him again until just before sunset.

The old man saw the brown fins corning along the wide trail the fish must make in the water. They were not even quartering on the scent. They were headed straight for the skiff swimming side by side.

He jammed the tiller, made the sheet fast and reached under the stern for the club. It was an oar handle from a broken oar sawed off to about two and a half feet in length. He could only use it effectively with one hand because of the grip of the handle and he took good hold of it with his right hand, flexing his hand on it, as he watched the sharks come. They were both *galanos*.

I must let the first one get a good hold and hit him on the point of the nose or straight across the top of the head, he thought.

The two sharks closed together and as he saw the one nearest

him open his jaws and sink them into the silver side of the fish, he raised the club high and brought it down heavy and slamming onto the top of the shark's broad head. He felt the rubbery solidity as the club carne down. But he felt the rigidity of bone too and he struck the shark once more hard across the point of the nose as he slid down from the fish.

The other shark had been in and out and now carne in again with his jaws wide. The old man could see pieces of the meat of the fish spilling white from the corner of his jaws as he bumped the fish and closed his jaws. He swung at him and hit only the head and the shark looked at him and wrenched the meat loose. The old man swung the club down on him again as he slipped away to swallow and hit only the heavy solid rubberiness.

"Come on, *galano*, the old man said. "Come in again."

The shark came in a rush and the old man hit him as he shut his jaws. He hit him solidly and from as high up as he could raise the club. This time he felt the bone at the base of the brain and he hit him again in the same place while the shark tore the meat loose sluggishly and slid down from the fish.

The old man watched for him to come again but neither shark showed. Then he saw one on the surface swimming in circles. He did not see the fin of the other.

I could not expect to kill them, he thought. I could have in my time. But I have hurt them both badly and neither one can feel very good. If I could have used a bat with two hands I could have killed the first one surely. Even now, he thought.

He did not want to look at the fish. He knew that half of him had been destroyed. The sun had gone down while he had been in the fight with the sharks.

"It will be dark soon," he said. "Then I should see the glow of Havana. If I am too far to the eastward I will see the lights of one of the new beaches."

I cannot be too far out now, he thought. I hope no one has been

too worried. There is only the boy to worry, of course. But I am sure he would have confidence. Many of the older fishermen will worry. Many others too, he thought. I live in a good town.

He could not talk to the fish anymore because the fish had been ruined too badly. Then something came into his head.

"Half fish," he said. "Fish that you were. I am sorry that I went too far out. I ruined us both. But we have killed many sharks, you and I, and ruined many others. How many did you ever kill, old fish? You do not have that spear on your head for nothing."

He liked to think of the fish and what he could do to a shark if he were swimming free. I should have chopped the bill off to fight them with, he thought. But there was no hatchet and then there was no knife.

But if I had, and could have lashed it to an oar butt, what a weapon. Then we might have fought them together. What will you do now if they come in the night? What can you do?

"Fight them," he said. "I'll fight them until I die."

But in the dark now and no glow showing and no lights and only the wind and the steady pull of the sail he felt that perhaps he was already dead. He put his two hands together and felt the palms. They were not dead and he could bring the pain of life by simply opening and closing them. He leaned his back against the stern and knew he was not dead. His shoulders told him.

I have all those prayers I promised if I caught the fish, he thought. But I am too tired to say them now. I better get the sack and put it over my shoulders.

He lay in the stern and steered and watched for the glow to come in the sky. I have half of him, he thought. Maybe I'll have the luck to bring the forward half in. I should have some luck. No, he said. You violated your luck when you went too far outside.

"Don't be silly," he said aloud. "And keep awake and steer. You may have much luck yet.

"I'd like to buy some if there's any place they sell it," he said.

What could I buy it with? he asked himself. Could I buy it with a lost harpoon and a broken knife and two bad hands?

"You might," he said. "You tried to buy it with eighty-four days at sea. They nearly sold it to you too."

I must not think nonsense, he thought. Luck is a thing that comes in many forms and who can recognize her? I would take some though in any form and pay what they asked. I wish I could see the glow from the lights, he thought. I wish too many things. But that is the thing I wish for now. He tried to settle more comfortably to steer and from his pain he knew he was not dead.

He saw the reflected glare of the lights of the city at what must have been around ten o'clock at night. They were only perceptible at first as the light is in the sky before the moon rises. Then they were steady to see across the ocean which was rough now with the increasing breeze. He steered inside of the glow and he thought that now, soon, he must hit the edge of the stream.

Now it is over, he thought. They will probably hit me again. But what can a man do against them in the dark without a weapon?

He was stiff and sore now and his wounds and all of the strained parts of his body hurt with the cold of the night. I hope I do not have to fight again, he thought. I hope so much I do not have to fight again.

But by midnight he fought and this time he knew the fight was useless. They came in a pack and he could only see the lines in the water that their fins made and their phosphorescence as they threw themselves on the fish. He clubbed at heads and heard the jaws chop and the shaking of the skiff as they took hold below. He clubbed desperately at what he could only feel and hear and he felt something seize the club and it was gone.

He jerked the tiller free from the rudder and beat and chopped with it, holding it in both hands and driving it down again and again. But they were up to the bow now and driving in one after the other and together, tearing off the pieces of meat that showed

glowing below the sea as they turned to come once more.

One came, finally, against the head itself and he knew that it was over. He swung the tiller across the shark's head where the jaws were caught in the heaviness of the fish's head which would not tear. He swung it once and twice and again. He heard the tiller break and he lunged at the shark with the splintered butt. He felt it go in and knowing it was sharp he drove it in again. The shark let go and rolled away. That was the last shark of the pack that came. There was nothing more for them to eat.

The old man could hardly breathe now and he felt a strange taste in his mouth. It was coppery and sweet and he was afraid of it for a moment. But there was not much of it.

He spat into the ocean and said, "Eat that, *galanos*. And make a dream you've killed a man."

He knew he was beaten now finally and without remedy and he went back to the stern and found the jagged end of the tiller would fit in the slot of the rudder well enough for him to steer. He settled the sack around his shoulders and put the skiff on her course. He sailed lightly now and he had no thoughts nor any feelings of any kind. He was past everything now and he sailed the skiff to make his home port as well and as intelligently as he could. In the night sharks hit the carcass as someone might pick up crumbs from the table. The old man paid no attention to them and did not pay any attention to anything except steering. He only noticed how lightly and how well the skiff sailed now there was no great weight beside her.

She's good, he thought. She is sound and not harmed in any way except for the tiller. That is easily replaced.

He could feel he was inside the current now and he could see the lights of the beach colonies along the shore. He knew where he was now and it was nothing to get home.

The wind is our friend, anyway, he thought. Then he added, sometimes. And the great sea with our friends and our enemies.

And bed, he thought. Bed is my friend. Just bed, he thought. Bed will be a great thing. It is easy when you are beaten, he thought. I never knew how easy it was. And what beat you, he thought.

"Nothing," he said aloud. "I went out too far."

When he sailed into the little harbour the lights of the Terrace were out and he knew everyone was in bed. The breeze had risen steadily and was blowing strongly now. It was quiet in the harbour though and he sailed up onto the little patch of shingle below the rocks. There was no one to help him so he pulled the boat up as far as he could. Then he stepped out and made her fast to a rock.

He unstepped the mast and furled the sail and tied it. Then he shouldered the mast and started to climb. It was then he knew the depth of his tiredness. He stopped for a moment and looked back and saw in the reflection from the street light the great tail of the fish standing up well behind the skiff's stern. He saw the white naked line of his backbone and the dark mass of the head with the projecting bill and all the nakedness between.

He started to climb again and at the top he fell and lay for some time with the mast across his shoulder. He tried to get up. But it was too difficult and he sat there with the mast on his shoulder and looked at the road. A cat passed on the far side going about its business and the old man watched it. Then he just watched the road.

Finally he put the mast down and stood up. He picked the mast up and put it on his shoulder and started up the road. He had to sit down five times before he reached his shack.

Inside the shack he leaned the mast against the wall. In the dark he found a water bottle and took a drink. Then he lay down on the bed. He pulled the blanket over his shoulders and then over his back and legs and he slept face down on the newspapers with his arms out straight and the palms of his hands up.

He was asleep when the boy looked in the door in the morning. It was blowing so hard that the drifting-boats would not be going

out and the boy had slept late and then come to the old man's shack as he had come each morning. The boy saw that the old man was breathing and then he saw the old man's hands and he started to cry. He went out very quietly to go to bring some coffee and all the way down the road he was crying.

Many fishermen were around the skiff looking at what was lashed beside it and one was in the water, his trousers rolled up, measuring the skeleton with a length of line.

The boy did not go down. He had been there before and one of the fishermen was looking after the skiff for him.

"How is he?" one of the fishermen shouted. "Sleeping," the boy called. He did not care that they saw him crying. "Let no one disturb him."

"He was eighteen feet from nose to tail," the fisherman who was measuring him called.

"I believe it," the boy said.

He went into the Terrace and asked for a can of coffee.

"Hot and with plenty of milk and sugar in it."

"Anything more?"

"No. Afterwards I will see what he can eat."

"What a fish it was," the proprietor said. "There has never been such a fish. Those were two fine fish you took yesterday too."

"Damn my fish," the boy said and he started to cry again.

"Do you want a drink of any kind?" the proprietor asked.

"No," the boy said. "Tell them not to bother Santiago. I'll be back."

"Tell him how sorry I am."

"Thanks," the boy said.

The boy carried the hot can of coffee up to the old man's shack and sat by him until he woke. Once it looked as though he were waking. But he had gone back into heavy sleep and the boy had gone across the road to borrow some wood to heat the coffee.

Finally the old man woke.

“Don’t sit up,” the boy said. “Drink this.” He poured some of the coffee in a glass.

The old man took it and drank it.

“They beat me, Manolin,” he said. “They truly beat me.”

“*He* didn’t beat you. Not the fish.” “No. Truly. It was afterwards.”

“Pedrico is looking after the skiff and the gear. What do you want done with the head?”

“Let Pedrico chop it up to use in fish traps.” “And the spear?”

“You keep it if you want it.”

“I want it,” the boy said. “Now we must make our plans about the other things.”

“Did they search for me?”

“Of course. With coast guard and with planes.”

“The ocean is very big and a skiff is small and hard to see,” the old man said. He noticed how pleasant it was to have someone to talk to instead of speaking only to himself and to the sea. “I missed you,” he said. “What did you catch?”

“One the first day. One the second and two the third.”

“Very good.”

“Now we fish together again.”

“No. I am not lucky. I am not lucky anymore.”

“The hell with luck,” the boy said. “I’ll bring the luck with me.”

“What will your family say?”

“I do not care. I caught two yesterday. But we will fish together now for I still have much to learn.”

“We must get a good killing lance and always have it on board. You can make the blade from a spring leaf from an old Ford. We can grind it in Guanabacoa. It should be sharp and not tempered so it will break. My knife broke.”

“I’ll get another knife and have the spring ground. How many days of heavy *brisa* have we?”

“Maybe three. Maybe more.”

“I will have everything in order,” the boy said. “You get your hands well old man.”

“I know how to care for them. In the night I spat something strange and felt something in my chest was broken.”

“Get that well too,” the boy said. “Lie down, old man, and I will bring you your clean shirt. And something to eat.”

“Bring any of the papers of the time that I was gone,” the old man said.

“You must get well fast for there is much that I can learn and you can teach me everything. How much did you suffer?”

“Plenty,” the old man said.

“I’ll bring the food and the papers,” the boy said.

“Rest well, old man. I will bring stuff from the drugstore for your hands.”

“Don’t forget to tell Pedrico the head is his.”

“No. I will remember.”

As the boy went out the door and down the worn coral rock road he was crying again.

That afternoon there was a party of tourists at the Terrace and looking down in the water among the empty beer cans and dead barracudas a woman saw a great long white spine with a huge tail at the end that lifted and swung with the tide while the east wind blew a heavy steady sea outside the entrance to the harbour.

“What’s that?” she asked a waiter and pointed to the long backbone of the great fish that was now just garbage waiting to go out with the tide.

“Tiburon,” the waiter said. “Eshark.” He was meaning to explain what happened.

“I didn’t know sharks had such handsome, beautifully formed tails.”

“I didn’t either,” her male companion said.

Up the road, in his shack, the old man was sleeping again. He was still sleeping on his face and the boy was sitting by him

watching him. The old man was dreaming about the lions.

ERNEST

HEMINGWAY

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

Islands in the Stream

Ernest Hemingway

CONTENTS

Part I—Bimini

Chapter I
Chapter II
Chapter III
Chapter IV
Chapter V
Chapter VI
Chapter VII
Chapter VIII
Chapter IX
Chapter X
Chapter XI
Chapter XII
Chapter XIII
Chapter XIV
Chapter XV

Part II—Cuba

Part III—At Sea

Chapter I
Chapter II
Chapter III
Chapter IV
Chapter V
Chapter VI
Chapter VII
Chapter VIII
Chapter IX
Chapter X
Chapter XI
Chapter XII
Chapter XIII
Chapter XIV
Chapter XV

Chapter XVI
Chapter XVII
Chapter XVIII
Chapter XIX
Chapter XX
Chapter XXI

Part I
Bimini

I

The house was built on the highest part of the narrow tongue of land between the harbor and the open sea. It had lasted through three hurricanes and it was built solid as a ship. It was shaded by tall coconut palms that were bent by the trade wind and on the ocean side you could walk out of the door and down the bluff across the white sand and into the Gulf Stream. The water of the Stream was usually a dark blue when you looked out at it when there was no wind. But when you walked out into it there was just the green light of the water over that floury white sand and you could see the shadow of any big fish a long time before he could ever come in close to the beach.

It was a safe and fine place to bathe in the day but it was no place to swim at night. At night the sharks came in close to the beach, hunting in the edge of the Stream and from the upper porch of the house on quiet nights you could hear the splashing of the fish they hunted and if you went down to the beach you could see the phosphorescent wakes they made in the water. At night the sharks had no fear and everything else feared them. But in the day they stayed out away from the clear white sand and if they did come in you could see their shadows a long way away.

A man named Thomas Hudson, who was a good painter, lived there in that house and worked there and on the island the greater part of the year. After one has lived in those latitudes long enough the changes of the seasons become as important there as anywhere else and Thomas Hudson, who loved the island, did not want to miss any spring, nor summer, nor any fall or winter.

Sometimes the summers were too hot when the wind dropped in August or when the trade winds sometimes failed in June and July. Hurricanes, too, might come in September and October and even in early November and there could be freak tropical storms any time from June on. But the true hurricane months have fine weather when there are no storms.

Thomas Hudson had studied tropical storms for many years and he could tell from the sky when there was a tropical disturbance long before his barometer showed its presence. He knew how to plot storms and the precautions that should be taken against them. He knew too what it was to live through a hurricane with the other people of the island and the bond that the hurricane made between all people who had been through it. He also knew that hurricanes could be so bad that nothing could live through them. He always thought, though, that if there was ever one that bad he would like to be there for it and go with the house if she went.

The house felt almost as much like a ship as a house. Placed there to ride out storms, it was built into the island as though it were a part of it; but you saw the sea from all the windows and there was good cross ventilation so that you slept cool on the hottest nights. The house was painted white to be cool in the summer and it could be seen from a long way out in the Gulf Stream. It was the highest thing on the island except for the long planting of tall casuarina trees that were the first thing you saw as you raised the island out of the sea. Soon after you saw the dark blur of casuarina trees above the line of the sea, you would see the white bulk of the house. Then, as you came closer, you raised the whole length of the island with the coconut palms, the clapboarded houses, the white line of the beach, and the green of the South Island stretching beyond it. Thomas Hudson never saw the house, there on that island, but that the sight of her made him happy. He always thought of the house as *her* exactly as he would have thought of a ship. In the winter, when the northers blew and it was

really cold, the house was warm and comfortable because it had the only fireplace on the island. It was a big open fireplace and Thomas Hudson burned driftwood in it.

He had a big pile of driftwood stacked against the south wall of the house. It was whitened by the sun and sand-scoured by the wind and he would become fond of different pieces so that he would hate to burn them. But there was always more driftwood along the beach after the big storms and he found it was fun to burn even the pieces he was fond of. He knew the sea would sculpt more, and on a cold night he would sit in the big chair in front of the fire, reading by the lamp that stood on the heavy plank table and look up while he was reading to hear the north wester blowing outside and the crashing of the surf and watch the great, bleached pieces of driftwood burning.

Sometimes he would put the lamp out and lie on the rug on the floor and watch the edges of color that the sea salt and the sand in the wood made in the flame as they burned. On the floor his eyes were even with the line of the burning wood and he could see the line of the flame when it left the wood and it made him both sad and happy. All wood that burned affected him in this way. But burning driftwood did something to him that he could not define. He thought that it was probably wrong to burn it when he was so fond of it; but he felt no guilt about it.

As he lay on the floor he felt under the wind although, really, the wind whipped at the lower corners of the house and at the lowest grass on the island and into the roots of the sea grass and the cockleburs and into the sand itself. On the floor he could feel the pounding of the surf the way he remembered feeling the firing of heavy guns when he had lain on the earth close by some battery a long time ago when he had been a boy.

The fireplace was a great thing in winter and through all the other months he looked at it with affection and thought how it would be when winter came again. Winter was the best of all

seasons on the island and he looked forward to it through all the rest of the year.

II

Winter was over and spring was nearly gone when Thomas Hudson's boys came to the island that year. It had been arranged for the three of them to meet in New York to come down together on the train and then fly over from the Mainland. There had been the usual difficulties with the mother of two of the boys. She had planned a European trip saying nothing, of course, to the boys' father when she planned it, and she wanted the boys for the summer. He could have them for the Christmas holidays; after Christmas of course. Christmas itself would be spent with her.

Thomas Hudson was familiar with the pattern by now and finally there was the usual compromise. The two younger boys would come to the island to visit their father for five weeks and then leave to sail from New York, student class, on a French Line boat to join their mother in Paris where she would have bought a few necessary clothes. They would be in the charge of their older brother, young Tom, on the trip. Young Tom would then join *his* mother, who was making a picture in the south of France.

Young Tom's mother had not asked for him and would have liked him to be at the island with his father. But she would love to see him and it was a fair compromise with the unmalleable decision of the other boys' mother. She was a delightful and charming woman who had never altered a plan that she had made in her life. Her plans were always made in secret, like those of a good general, and they were as rigidly enforced. A compromise might be effected. But never a basic change in a plan whether that plan was conceived in a sleepless night or on an angry morning or on a gin-aided

evening.

A plan was a plan and a decision was truly a decision and knowing all this and having been well educated in the usages of divorce, Thomas Hudson was happy that a compromise had been made and that the children were coming for five weeks. If five weeks is what we get, he thought, that is what we draw. Five weeks is a good long time to be with people that you love and would wish to be with always. But why did I ever leave Tom's mother in the first place? You'd better not think about that, he told himself. That is one thing you had better not think about. And these are fine children that you got from the other one. Very strange and very complicated and you know how many of their good qualities come from her. She is a fine woman and you never should have left her either. Then he said to himself, Yes. I had to.

But he did not worry much about any of it. He had long ago ceased to worry and he had exorcized guilt with work insofar as he could, and all he cared about now was that the boys were coming over and that they should have a good summer. Then he would go back to work.

He had been able to replace almost everything except the children with work and the steady normal working life he had built on the island. He believed he had made something there that would last and that would hold him. Now when he was lonesome for Paris he would remember Paris instead of going there. He did the same thing with all of Europe and much of Asia and of Africa.

He remembered what Renoir had said when they told him that Gauguin had gone to Tahiti paint. "Why does he have to spend so much money to go so far away to paint when one paints so well here at the Batignolles?" It was better in French, "quand on peint si bien aux Batignolles," and Thomas Hudson thought of the island as his *quartier* and he was settled in it and knew his neighbors and worked as hard as he had ever worked in Paris when young Tom had been a baby.

Sometimes he would leave the island to fish off Cuba or to go to the mountains in the fall. But he had rented the ranch that he owned in Montana because the best time out there was the summer and the fall and now the boys always had to go to school in the fall.

He had to go to New York occasionally to see his dealer. But more often now his dealer came down to see him and took canvases north with him. He was well established as a painter and he was respected both in Europe and in his own country. He had a regular income from oil leases on land his grandfather had owned. It had been grazing land and when it was sold the mineral rights had been retained. About half of this income went into alimony and the balance provided him with security so that he could paint exactly as he wanted to with no commercial pressure. It also enabled him to live where he wished and to travel when he cared to.

He had been successful in almost every way except in his married life, although he had never cared, truly, about success. What he cared about was painting and his children and he was still in love with the first woman he had been in love with. He had loved many women since and sometimes someone would come to stay on the island. He needed to see women and they were welcome for a while. He liked having them there, sometimes for quite a long time. But in the end he was always glad when they were gone, even when he was very fond of them. He had trained himself not to quarrel with women anymore and he had learned how not to get married. These two things had been nearly as difficult to learn as how to settle down and paint in a steady and well-ordered way. But he had learned them and he hoped that he had learned them permanently. He had known how to paint for a long time and he believed he learned more every year. But learning how to settle down and how to paint with discipline had been hard for him because there had been a time in his life when he had not been disciplined. He had never been truly irresponsible; but he had been undisciplined, selfish, and ruthless. He knew this now, not only

because many women had told it to him; but because he had finally discovered it for himself. Then he had resolved that he would be selfish only for his painting, ruthless only for his work, and that he would discipline himself and accept the discipline.

He was going to enjoy life within the limits of the discipline that he imposed and work hard. And today he was very happy because his children were coming in the morning.

"Mr. Tom, don't you want nothing?" Joseph the houseboy asked him. "You knocked off for the day, ain't you?"

Joseph was tall with a very long, very black face and big hands and big feet. He wore a white jacket and trousers and was barefooted.

"Thank you, Joseph. I don't think I want anything."

"Little gin and tonic?"

"No. I think I'll go down and have one at Mr. Bobby's."

"Drink one here. It's cheaper. Mr. Bobby was in an evil mood when I went by. Too many mixed drinks he says. Somebody off a yacht asked him for something called a White Lady and he served her a bottle of that American mineral water with a lady in white kinda mosquito netting dress sitting by a spring."

"I better be getting down there."

"Let me mix you one first. You got some mails on the pilot boat. You can read your mails and drink the drink and then go down to Mr. Bobby's."

"All right."

"Good thing," said Joseph. "Because I already mixed it. Mails don't look to amount to anything, Mr. Tom."

"Where are they?"

"Down in the kitchen. I'll bring them up. Couple with women's writing on them. One from New York. One from Palm Beach. Pretty writing. One from that gentleman sells your pictures in New York. Couple more unknown to me."

"You want to answer them for me?"

“Yes sir. If that’s what you want. I’m educated way beyond my means.”

“Better bring them up.”

“Yes sir, Mr. Tom. There’s a paper too.”

“Save it for breakfast, please, Joseph.”

Thomas Hudson sat and read his mail and sipped at the cool drink. He read one letter over again and then put them all in a drawer of his desk.

“Joseph,” he called. “Have you everything ready for the boys?”

“Yes sir, Mr. Tom. And two extra cases of Coca-Cola. Young Tom, he must be bigger than me, ain’t he?”

“Not yet.”

“Think he can lick me now?”

“I don’t think so.”

“I fought that boy so many times in private life,” Joseph said. “Sure is funny to call him mister. Mr. Tom, Mr. David, and Mr. Andrew. Three of the finest goddamn boys I know. And the meanest is Andy.”

“He started out mean,” Thomas Hudson said.

“And boy, did he continue,” Joseph said admiringly. “You set them a good example this summer.”

“Mr. Tom, you don’t want me to set those boys no good example this summer. Maybe three four years back when I was innocent. Me, I’m going to pattern myself on Tom. He’s been to an expensive school and he’s got good expensive manners. I can’t look like him exactly. But I can act like him. Free and easy but polite. Then I’m going to be smart like Dave. That’s the hardest part. Then I’m going to learn the secret of how Andy gets that mean.”

“Don’t you get mean around here.”

“No, Mr. Tom, you mistook what I meant. That meanness isn’t for in the house. I want that for my private life.”

“It will be nice to have them, won’t it?”

“Mr. Tom, there won’t be nothing like it since they had the big

fire. I rank it right along with the Second Coming. Is it nice? You ask me. Yes sir, it's nice."

"We'll have to figure out plenty of things for them to do to have fun."

"No, Mr. Tom," Joseph said. "We ought to figure out how to save them from their own fearsome projects. Eddy can help us. He knows them better than me. I'm their friend and that makes it difficult."

"How's Eddy?"

"He's been drinking a little in anticipation of the Queen's birthday. He's in tip-top shape."

"I better get down to Mr. Bobby's while he's still in that evil mood."

"He asked for you, Mr. Tom. Mr. Bobby's a gentleman if there ever was a gentleman and sometimes that trash comes in on yachts gets him worn down. He was wore down almighty thin when I left."

"What were you doing there?"

"I went for Coca-Cola and I stayed to keep my hand in shooting a stick of pool."

"How's the table?"

"Worse."

"I'll go down," said Thomas Hudson. "I want to take a shower and change."

"I've got them laying out for you on the bed," Joseph told him. "You want another gin and tonic?"

"No thanks."

"Mr. Roger's in on the boat."

"Good. I'll get hold of him."

"Will he be staying here?"

"Maybe."

"I'll make up a bed for him anyway."

"Good."

III

Thomas Hudson took a shower, scrubbing his head with soap and then rinsing under the prickling drive of the sharp, jetted shower. He was a big man and he looked bigger stripped than he did in his clothes. He was very tanned and his hair was faded and streaked from the sun. He carried no extra weight and on the scales he saw that he weighed 192 pounds.

I should have gone swimming before I took the shower, he thought. But I had a long swim this morning before I started work and I'm tired now. There will be plenty of swimming when the boys come. And Roger's here too. That's good.

He put on a clean pair of shorts and an old Basque shirt and moccasins and went out the door and down the slope and through the gate in the picket fence onto the white glare of the sun-bleached coral of the King's Highway.

Ahead a very erect-walking old Negro in a black alpaca coat and pressed dark trousers came out of one of the unpainted board shacks along the road that was shaded by two tall coconut palms and turned into the highway ahead of him. Thomas Hudson saw his fine black face as he turned.

From behind the shack a child's voice came in an old English tune singing mockingly,

"Uncle Edward came from Nassau
Some candy for to sell
I buy some and P.H. buy some
And the candy give us hell—"

Uncle Edward turned his fine face, looking as sad as it was angry, in the bright afternoon light.

"I know you," he said. "I can't see you but I know who you are. I'll report you to Constable."

The child's voice went on, rising clear and gay,

"Oh Edward
Oh Edward
Buff, rough, tough Uncle Edward
Your candy rotten."

"Constable going to hear about this," Uncle Edward said.

"Constable know what steps to take."

"Any rotten candy today, Uncle Edward?" the child's voice called. He was careful to keep out of sight.

"Man is persecuted," Uncle Edward said aloud as he walked on. "Man has his robe of dignity plucked at and destroyed. Oh, Good Lord, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Ahead down the King's Highway there was more singing coming from the rooms up above the Ponce de León. A Negro boy slipped by hurrying along the coral road.

"Been a fight, Mr. Tom," he said. "Or something. Gentleman off'n a yacht been throwing things out of a window."

"What things, Louis?"

"Any kind of things, Mr. Tom. Gentleman throw anything he can get his hands on. Lady try to stop him he say he going to throw the lady, too."

"Where's the gentleman from?"

"Big man from up north. Claims he can buy and sell the whole island. Guess he could get it pretty cheap if he keeps throwing it around the way he's doing."

"Constable taken any action, Louis?"

"No sir, Mr. Tom. Nobody has called in Constable yet. But way everybody figures, Constable's time is coming."

"You with them, Louis? I wanted to get some bait for tomorrow."

"Yes sir, I'll get your bait, Mr. Tom. Don't worry about bait. I been with them right along. They hired me to take them bonefishing this morning and I been with them ever since. Only they ain't been bonefishing. No *sir.* Unless throwing plates and cups and mugs and chairs and every time Mr. Bobby brings him the bill he tears up the bill and tells Mr. Bobby he's a robbing thieving bastard and a crook is bonefishing."

"Sounds like a difficult gentleman, Louis."

"Mr. Tom, he's the damnedest gentleman you ever saw before or since. He had me singing for them. You know I can't sing good like Josey but I sing as good as I can and sometimes I sing *better* than I can. I'm singing *good* as I can. You know how it is. You heard me sing. All he wants to hear is that mama don't want no peas no rice no coconut oil song. Over and over. It's an old song and I get tired so I said to him, 'Sir I know *new* songs. Good songs. Fine songs. And I know old songs such as the loss of John Jacob Astor on the *Titanic* when sunk by an iceberg and I would be glad to sing them rather than that no peas no rice song if you so wish.' I said it polite and pleasant as you want. As you know I would say it. So this gentleman say, 'Listen you ignorant black little bastard I own more stores and factories and newspapers than John Jacob Astor had pots to, you know the word, in, and I'll take you and shove your head in those pots if you try to tell me what I want to hear.' So then his lady said, 'Darling, do you really have to be so rude to the boy? I thought he sang very well and I would like to hear some of the new songs.' And the gentleman said, 'Listen you. *You* won't hear them and *he* won't sing them.' Mr. Tom, he's a strange gentleman. But his lady just said, 'Oh darling, you are difficult.' Mr. Tom, he's difficulter than a diesel engine is to a newborn tree monkey out of its mother's womb. Excuse me if I talk too much. This has aroused me. He's got her feeling very bad."

"What are you doing to do about them now, Louis?"

"I been to get conch pearls," he said.

They had stopped in the shade of a palm while he had been talking and he brought out a quite clean cloth from his pocket and unfolded it to show a half dozen of the shiny, nacreous pink, unpearllike pearls that are sometimes found in conches by the natives when they clean them and that no woman Thomas Hudson had ever known except Queen Mary of England has ever cared for as a gift. Of course Thomas Hudson could not think that he knew Queen Mary except through the papers and in pictures and a profile of her in *The New Yorker* but the fact that she liked conch pearls made him feel that he knew her better than he knew many other people he had known for a long time. Queen Mary liked conch pearls and the island was celebrating her birthday tonight, he thought, but he was afraid conch pearls would not make that gentleman's lady feel very much better. Then, too, it was always possible that Queen Mary said she liked them to please her subjects in the Bahamas.

They had walked down to the Ponce de León and Louis was saying, "His lady was crying, Mr. Tom. She was crying very bitterly. So I suggested I might go up to Roy's and get some conch pearls for her to inspect."

"They ought to make her very happy," Thomas Hudson said. "If she likes conch pearls."

"I hope they will. I'm taking them up now."

Thomas Hudson went into the bar where it was cool and almost dark after the glare of the coral road and had a gin and tonic water with a piece of lime peel in the glass and a few drops of Angostura in the drink. Mr. Bobby was behind the bar looking terrible. Four Negro boys were playing billiards, occasionally lifting the table when necessary to bring off a difficult carom. The singing had stopped upstairs and it was very quiet in the room except for the click of the balls. Two of the crew of the yacht that was tied up in

the slip were at the bar and as Thomas Hudson's eyes adjusted to the light it was dim and cool and pleasant. Louis came downstairs.

"Gentleman's asleep," he said. "I left the pearls with his lady. She's looking at them and crying."

He saw the two sailors from the yacht look at each other but they didn't say anything. He stood there, holding the long, pleasantly bitter drink, tasting the first swallow of it, and it reminded him of Tanga, Mombasa, and Lamu and all that coast and he had a sudden nostalgia for Africa. Here he was, settled on the island, when he could as well be in Africa. Hell, he thought, I can always go there. You have to make it inside of yourself wherever you are. You are doing all right at that here.

"Tom, do you really like the taste of that stuff?" Bobby asked him.

"Sure. Or I wouldn't drink it."

"I opened a bottle by mistake once and it tasted like quinine."

"It's got quinine in it."

"People surely are crazy," Bobby said. "Man can drink anything he wants. He has money to pay for it. He's supposed to be taking his pleasure and he spoils good gin by putting it into some kind of a Hindu drink with quinine in it."

"It tastes good to me. I like the quinine taste with the lime peel. I think it sort of opens up the pores of the stomach or something. I get more of a kick out of it than any other gin drink. It makes me feel good."

"I know. Drinking always makes you feel good. Drinking makes me feel terrible. Where's Roger?"

Roger was a friend of Thomas Hudson's, who had a fishing shack down the island.

"He ought to be over soon. We're going to eat with Johnny Goodner."

"What men like you and Roger Davis and Johnny Goodner that been around stay around this island for I don't know."

“It’s a good island. You stay here, don’t you?”

“I stay to make a living.”

“You could make a living in Nassau.”

“Nassau, hell. There’s more fun here. This is a good island for having fun. Plenty money been made here, too.”

“I like to live here.”

“Sure,” said Bobby. “I do, too. You know that. If I can make a living. You sell those pictures you paint all the time?”

“They sell pretty good now.”

“People paying money for pictures of Uncle Edward. Pictures of Negroes in the water. Negroes on land. Negroes in boats. Turtle boats. Sponge boats. Squalls making up. Waterspouts. Schooners that got wrecked. Schooners building. Everything they could see free. They really buy them?”

“Sure they buy them. Once a year you have a show in New York and they sell them.”

“Auction them off?”

“No. The dealer who shows them puts a price on them. People buy them. Museums buy one once in a while.”

“Can’t you sell them yourself?”

“Sure.”

“I’d like to buy a waterspout,” Bobby said. “Damn big waterspout. Black as hell. Maybe better two waterspouts going roaring over the flats making a noise so you can’t hear. Sucking all the water across and scare you to death. Me in the dinghy sponging and nothing I can do. Waterspout blow the water glass right out of my hand. Almost suck the dinghy up out of the water. God’s own hell of a waterspout. How much would one like that cost? I could hang it up right here. Or hang it up at home if it wouldn’t scare the old woman to death.”

“It would depend on how big it was.”

“Make it as big as you want,” Bobby said grandly. “You can’t make a picture like that too damn big. Put in three waterspouts. I

seen three waterspouts closer than that across by Andros Island one time. They went right up to the sky and one sucked up a sponger's boat and when it dropped the motor went right through the hull."

"It's just what the canvas would cost," Thomas Hudson said. "I'd only charge for the canvas."

"By God, get a big canvas then," Bobby said. "We'll paint waterspouts that will scare people right out of this bar and right off the damned island."

He was moved by the grandeur of the project but its possibilities were just opening up to him.

"Tom, boy, do you think you could paint a full hurricane? Paint her right in the eye of the storm when she's already blew from one side and calmed and just starting from the other? Put in everything from the Negroes lashed in the coconut palms to the ships blowing over the crest of the island? Put in the big hotel going. Put in two-by-fours sailing through the air like lances and dead pelicans blowing by like they were part of the gusts of rain. Have the glass down to twenty-seven and the wind velocities blown away. Have the sea breaking on the ten-fathom bar and the moon come out in the eye of the storm. Have a tidal wave come up and submerge every living thing. Have women blown out to sea with their clothes stripped from them by the wind. Have dead Negroes floating everywhere and flying through the air—"

"It's an awfully big canvas," Thomas Hudson said.

"To hell with the canvas!" Bobby said. "I'll get a mainsail off a schooner. We'll paint the greatest goddamn pictures in the world and live throughout history. You've just been painting these little simple pictures."

"I'll start on the waterspouts," Thomas Hudson said.

"Right," said Bobby, hating to come back from the big project. "That's sound. But by God we can make some great pictures with the knowledge you and I've got and with the training you've put in already."

"I'll start on the waterspouts tomorrow."

"Good," said Bobby. "That's a beginning. But by God I'd like us to paint that hurricane, too. Anybody ever paint the sinking of the *Titanic?"*

"Not on a really big scale."

"We could paint that. There's a subject that always appealed to my imagination. You could get in the coldness of the iceberg as it moved off after they struck it. Paint the whole thing in a dense fog. Get in every detail. Get that man that got in the boat with the women because he thought he could help because he was a yachtsman. Paint him getting into the boat stepping on a few women just as big as life. He reminds me of that fellow we got upstairs now. Why don't you go upstairs and make a drawing of that one while he's asleep and use him in the painting?"

"I think we better just start with the waterspouts."

"Tom, I want you to be a *big* painter," Bobby said. "Leave all that chicken stuff behind. You've just been wasting yourself. Why there's three paintings we've outlined together in less than half an hour and I haven't even started to draw on my imagination. And what have you been doing up until now? Painting a Negro turning a loggerhead turtle on the beach. Not even a green turtle. A common loggerhead. Or painting two Negroes in a dinghy bullying a mess of crawfish. You've wasted your life, man." He stopped and had a quick one from underneath the bar.

"That don't count," he said. "You never saw me take that one. Look, Tom, those are three great paintings. Big paintings. Worldwide paintings. Fit to hang in the Crystal Palace alongside the masterpieces of all time. Except the first, of course, is a small subject. But we haven't started yet. No reason why we can't paint one to end them all. What do you think of this?"

He took a very quick one.

"Of what?"

He leaned over the bar so the others could not hear. "Don't

shear off from it," Bobby said. "Don't be shocked by its magnitude. You got to have vision, Tom. We can paint the End of the World," he paused. "Full size."

"Hell," Thomas Hudson said.

"No. Before hell. Hell is just opening. The Rollers are rolling in their church up on the ridge and all speaking in unknown tongues. There's a devil forking them up with his pitchfork and loading them into a cart. They're yelling and moaning and calling on Jehovah. Negroes are prostrated everywhere and morays and crawfish and spider crabs are moving around and over their bodies. There's a big sort of hatch open and devils are carrying Negroes and church people and rollers and everyone into it and they go out of sight. Water's rising all around the island and hammerheads and mackerel sharks and tiger sharks and shovel nose sharks are swimming round and round and feeding on those who try to swim away to keep from being forked down the big open hatch that has steam rising out of it. Rummies are taking their last swigs and beating on the devils with bottles. But the devils keep forking them down, or else they are engulfed by the rising sea where now there are whale sharks, great white sharks, and killer whales and other outsized fish circling outside of where the big sharks are tearing at those people in the water. The top of the island is covered with dogs and cats and the devils are forking them in, too, and the dogs are cowering and howling and the cats run off and claw the devils and their hair stands on end and finally they go into the sea swimming as good as you want to see. Sometimes a shark will hit one and you'll see the cat go under. But mostly they swim right off through it.

"Bad heat begins to come out of the hatch and the devils are having to drag the people toward the hatch because they've broken their pitching forks trying to fork in some of the church people. You and me are standing in the center of the picture observing all this with calm. You make a few notes and I refresh myself from a bottle and occasionally offer you refreshment. Once in a while a devil all

sweating from his work will brush by us hauling on a big churchman that's trying to dig into the sand with his fingers to keep from being put into the hatch and screaming to Jehovah and the devil will say, 'Beg pardon, Mr. Tom. Beg pardon, Mr. Bobby. Very busy today,'

"I'll offer the devil a drink as he passes, sweating and grimed, going back for another churchman and he'll say, 'No thank you, Mr. Bobby. I never touch the stuff when I'm working,'

"That could make a hell of a painting, Tom, if we can get all the movement and the grandeur into it."

"I believe we've got about all we can handle outlined for today."

"By God, I think you're right," Bobby said. "Outlining a painting like that makes me thirsty, too,"

"There was a man named Bosch could paint pretty well along those lines."

"The magneto man?"

"No. Hieronymus Bosch. Very old-timer. Very good. Pieter Brueghel worked on that too."

"He an old-timer too?"

"Very old-timer. Very good. You'd like him."

"Oh hell," said Bobby. "No old-timer will touch us. Besides the world's never ended yet, so how the hell does he know any more about it than we do?"

"He'd be pretty hard to beat."

"I don't believe a word of it," Bobby said. "We've got a picture that would put him out of business."

"What about another one of those?"

"Yes, damn it. I forget this is a bar room. God bless the Queen, Tom. We're forgetting what day it is, too. Here, have one on me and we'll drink her health."

He poured himself a small glass of rum and handed Thomas Hudson the bottle of Booth's yellow gin, some limes on a plate, a knife, and a bottle of Schweppes's Indian Tonic Water.

“Fix your own damn drink. The hell with those fancy drinks.”

After Thomas Hudson had made the drink and shaken a few drops of bitters in it from the bottle that had a gull’s quill in the cork, he raised his glass and then looked down the bar.

“What are you two drinking? Name it if it’s simple.”

“Dog’s Head,” one of the sailors said.

“Dog’s Head it is,” Bobby said and reached into the ice tub and handed them the two cold bottles of ale. “The glasses are out. Rummies been throwing the glasses away all day. Everybody got their drinks? Gentlemen, The Queen. I don’t think she’d care much for this island and I’m not sure she’d do extremely well here. But gentlemen, The Queen. God bless her.”

They all drank her health.

“Must be a great woman,” said Bobby. “Bit on the stiff side for me. Always fancied Queen Alexandra myself. Lovely type. But we will try to give the Queen’s Birthday full honors. This is a small island but a patriotic one. Man from here went to the last war and had an arm shot off. Can’t be more patriotic than that.”

“Whose birthday did he say it was?” one of the sailors asked.

“Queen Mary of England,” Bobby said. “Mother of the present King Emperor.”

“That’s the one the *Queen Mary’s* named after, isn’t it?” the other sailor asked.

“Tom,” said Bobby. “You and I will drink the next toast alone.”

IV

It was dark now and there was a breeze blowing so that there were no mosquitoes nor sand flies and the boats had all come in, hoisting their outriggers as they came up the channel, and now were lying tied up in the slips of the three docks that projected out from the beach into the harbor. The tide was running out fast and the lights of the boats shone on the water that showed green in the light and moved so fast it sucked at the piling of the docks and swirled at the stern of the big cruiser they were on. Alongside in the water where the light was reflected off the planking of the cruiser toward the unpainted piling of the dock where old motorcar and truck tires were tied as fenders, making dark rings against the darkness under the rock, garfish, attracted by the light, held themselves against the current. Thin and long, shining as green as the water, only their tails moving, they were not feeding, nor playing; only holding themselves there in the fascination of the light.

Johnny Goodner's cruiser, *Narwhal*, where they were waiting for Roger Davis, was headed into the ebbing tide and astern of her in the same slip, made fast so that the two cabin cruisers lay stern to stern, was the boat of the party that had been at Bobby's place all day. Johnny Goodner sat in a chair in the stern with his feet on another chair and a Tom Collins in his right hand and a long, green Mexican chile pepper in his left.

"It's wonderful," he said. "I bite just a little piece and it sets my mouth on fire and I cool it with this."

He took the first bite, swallowed, blew out, "thew!" through rolled tongue, and took a long swallow of the tall drink. His full

lower lip licked his thin Irish upper lip and he smiled with his gray eyes. His mouth was sliced upwards at the corners so it always looked as though he were about to smile, or had just smiled, but his mouth told very little about him unless you noticed the thinness of the upper lip. His eyes were what you needed to watch. He was the size and build of a middleweight gone a little heavy; but he looked in good shape lying there relaxed and that is how a man looks bad who is really out of shape. His face was brown but peeling across the nose and the forehead that went back with his receding hairline. He had a scar on his chin that could have been taken for a dimple if it had been just a little closer to the center and his nose had been just perceptibly flattened across the bridge. It wasn't a flat nose. It just looked as though it had been done by a modern sculptor who worked directly in the stone and had taken off just the shadow of a chip too many.

"Tom, you worthless character, what have you been doing?"

"Working pretty steadily."

"You would," he said and took another bite of the chile. It was a very wrinkled and droopy chile about six inches long.

"Only the first one hurts," he said. "It's like love."

"The hell it is. Chiles can hurt both ways."

"And love?"

"The hell with love," Thomas Hudson said.

"What a sentiment. What a way to talk. What are you getting to be? A victim of sheepherder's madness on this island?"

"No sheep here, Johnny."

"Stone-crab herder's madness then," Johnny said. "We don't want to have you have to be netted or anything. Try one of these chiles."

"I have," Thomas Hudson said.

"Oh I know your past," he said. "Don't pull your illustrious past on me. You probably invented them. I know. Probably the man who introduced them into Patagonia on Yak-back. But I represent

modern times. Listen Tommy. I have these chiles stuffed with salmon. Stuffed with bacalao. Stuffed with Chilean bonito. Stuffed with Mexican turtledoves' breasts. Stuffed with turkey meat and mole. They'll stuff them with anything and I buy them. Makes me feel like a damned potentate. But all that's a perversion. Just this long, drooping, uninspiring, unstuffed, unpromising old chile with the brown chupango sauce is the best. You bastard," he blew out through his pursed tongue again, "I got too much of you that time."

He took a really long pull at the Tom Collins.

"They give me a reason for drinking," he explained. "Have to cool my damned mouth. What are you having?"

"I might take one more gin and tonic."

"Boy," Johnny called. "One more gin and tonic for Bwana M'Kubwa."

Fred, one of the island boys Johnny's captain had hired, brought in the drink.

"Here it is, Mr. Tom."

"Thank you, Fred," Thomas Hudson said. "The Queen, God bless her," and they drank.

"Where's the old whoremaster?"

"Up at his house. He'll be down."

He ate some more of the chile without commenting on it, finished his drink, and said, "How are you really, old Tom?"

"OK," Thomas Hudson said. "I've learned how to live by myself pretty well and I work hard."

"Do you like it here? I mean for all the time."

"Yes. I got sick of moving around with it. I'd rather have it here. I get along well enough here, Johnny. Pretty damn well."

"It's a good place," said Johnny. "It's a good place for a guy like you that's got some sort of inner resources. Hell of a place for a guy like me that keeps chasing it or running away from it. Is it true that Roger's gone Red on us?"

"So they're saying that already."

"That's what I heard on the coast."

"What happened to him out there?"

"I don't know all of it. But it was something pretty bad."

"Really bad?"

"They've got different ideas of what's bad out there. It wasn't St. Quentin quail if that's what you mean. Anyway out there with that climate and the fresh vegetables and everything it's like the size of their football players. Hell, girls fifteen look twenty-four. At twenty-four they're Dame May Whitty. If you're not a marrying man you better look at their teeth pretty close. And of course you can't tell a damn thing from their teeth. And they've all got mothers and fathers or one or the other and they're all hungry. Climate gives them appetite, too, of course. Trouble is, people get enthusiastic sometimes and don't ask for their driving licenses or their social security cards. I think they ought to measure it by size and weight and general capabilities and not just by age. Wreaks too many injustices just going by age. All around. Precocity isn't penalized in any other sport. Other way around. Apprentice allowance claimed would be the fairest. Same as racing. They had me pretty well boxed on that rap. But that wasn't what they got old Roger on."

"What did they get me on?" Roger Davis asked.

He had dropped down from the dock onto the deck in his rope-soled shoes without making any noise and he stood there looking awfully big in a sweatshirt three sizes too large for him and a pair of tight old dungarees.

"Hi," said Johnny. "Didn't hear you ring. I was telling Tom I didn't know what they got you on but that it wasn't jailbait."

"Good," said Roger. "Let's drop the subject."

"Don't be so powerful," Johnny said.

"I'm not being powerful," Roger said. "I asked politely. Do you drink on this boat?" He looked at the cabin cruiser that lay with her stern toward them. "Who's that?"

"The people at the Ponce. Didn't you hear?"

“Oh,” said Roger. “Well let’s have a drink anyway even though they have set us a bad example.”

“Boy,” Johnny called. Fred came out of the cabin. “Yes sir,” he said.

“Enquire what the pleasure of these Sahibs is.”

“Gentlemen?” Fred asked.

“I’ll take whatever Mr. Tom is drinking,” Roger said. “He’s my guide and counselor.”

“Many boys at camp this year?” Johnny asked.

“Just two so far,” Roger said. “My counselor and I.”

“My counselor and me,” Johnny said. “How the hell do you write books?”

“I can always hire someone to put in the grammar.”

“Or get someone free,” Johnny said. “I’ve been talking with your counselor.”

“Counselor says he’s quite happy and contented here. He’s hit the beach for good.”

“You ought to see the place,” Tom told him. “He lets me come in for a drink once in a while.”

“Womens?”

“No womens.”

“What do you boys do?”

“I’ve been doing it all day.”

“But you were here before. What did you do then?”

“Swim, eat, drink. Tom works, read, talk, read, fish, fish, swim, drink, sleep—”

“No womens?”

“Still no womens.”

“Sounds unhealthy to me. Sort of unwholesome atmosphere. You boys smoke much opium?”

“Tom?” Roger asked.

“Only the best,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Got a nice stand of marijuana planted?”

“Any planted, Tom?” Roger asked.

“Was a bad year,” Thomas Hudson said. “Rain gave the crop hell.”

“Whole thing sounds unwholesome,” Johnny drank. “Only saving aspect is you still take a drink. You boys gone in for religion? Has Tom Seen The Light?”

“Tom?” Roger asked.

“Relations with the Deity about the same,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Cordial?”

“We are tolerant,” Thomas Hudson said. “Practice any faith you wish. Got a ball field up the island where you can practice.”

“I’ll give the Deity a fast one high and inside if he crowds the plate,” Roger said.

“Roger,” said Johnny reproachfully. “It’s after dark. Didn’t you see twilight fall and dusk set in and darkness come? And you a writer. Never a good idea to speak slightingly of the Deity after dark. He’s liable to be right behind you with his bat poised.”

“I’ll bet he’d crowd the plate, too,” Roger said. “I’ve seen him crowding it lately.”

“Yes sir,” Johnny said. “And he’d step into your fast one and knock your brains out. I’ve seen him hit.”

“Yes, I guess you have,” Roger agreed. “So has Tom and so have I. But I’d still try and get my fast ball by him.”

“Let’s cut out the theological discussion,” Johnny said. “And get something to eat.”

“That decrepit old man you keep to tool this thing around the ocean still know how to cook?” Thomas Hudson asked.

“Chowder,” Johnny said. “And a yellow rice tonight with plover. Golden plover.”

“You sound like a damned interior decorator,” Tom said. “There’s no gold on them this time of year, anyway. Where’d you shoot the plover?”

“On South Island when we went in to anchor and swim. I

whistled the flock back twice and kept knocking them down. There's two apiece."

It was a fine night and after they had eaten dinner they sat out in the stern with coffee and cigars, and a couple of other people, both worthless sporting characters, came over from one of the other boats with a guitar and a banjo and the Negroes gathered on the dock and there was some sporadic singing. In the dark, up on the dock, the boys would lead off with a song and then Fred Wilson, who had the guitar, would sing and Frank Hart would fake along on the banjo. Thomas Hudson could not sing, so he sat back in the dark and listened.

There was quite a lot of celebration going on at Bobby's place and you could see the lights from the open door over the water. The tide was still ebbing strong, and out where the light shone fish were jumping. They were gray snappers mostly, Tom thought, feeding on the bait fish that fell out with the tide. A few Negro boys were fishing with hand lines and you could hear them talking and cursing softly when they lost a fish, and hear the snappers flopping on the dock when they landed one. There were big snappers out there and the boys were baiting them up with chunks of marlin meat from a fish one of the boats had brought in early that afternoon and that had already been hung up, photographed, weighed, and butchered.

There was quite a crowd on the dock now with the singing and Rupert Pinder, a very big Negro who was said to have once carried a piano on his back, unaided, from the Government dock all the way up the King's Highway to the old club that the hurricane blew away, and who fancied himself as a fighting man, called down from the dock, "Captain John, boys say they getting thirsty."

"Buy something inexpensive and healthful, Rupert."

"Yes sir, Captain John. Rum."

"That's what I had in mind," John said. "Why not try for a demijohn? Better value, I think."

"Many thanks, Captain John," Rupert said. Rupert moved off

through the crowd which thinned rapidly and fell in behind him. Thomas Hudson could see them all heading toward Roy's place.

Just then, from one of the boats tied up at Brown's dock, a rocket rose with a whoosh high into the sky and burst with a pop to light up the channel. Another went whooshing up at an angle and burst, this time, just over the near end of their dock.

"Damn," said Fred Wilson. "We should have sent over to Miami for some."

The night was lighted now with rockets whishing and popping and, in the light, Rupert and his followers were coming back out onto the dock, Rupert carrying a big wicker demijohn on his shoulder.

Someone fired a rocket from one of the boats and it burst just over the dock, lighting up the crowd, the dark faces, necks, and hands, and Rupert's flat face, wide shoulders, and thick neck with the wicker-covered jug resting tenderly and proudly alongside his head.

"Cups," he said to his followers, speaking over his shoulder.

"Enameled cups."

"Got tin cups, Rupert," one boy said.

"Enameled cups," Rupert said. "Get them. Buy them from Roy. Here's money."

"Get the Verey pistol of ours, Frank," Fred Wilson said. "We might as well shoot up those flares and get some fresh ones."

While Rupert waited grandly for the cups someone brought a saucepan and Rupert poured into it and it was passed around.

"For the little people," Rupert said. "Drink up, unimportant people."

Singing was proceeding steadily and with little organization. Along with the rockets some of the boats were firing off rifles and pistols and from Brown's dock a Tommy gun was skipping tracers out over the channel. It fired a burst of threes and fours, then loosed off a full clip, rattling the red tracers out in a lovely looping

arc over the harbor.

The cups came at the same time as Frank Hart dropped down into the stern carrying a case with a Verey pistol and an assortment of flares and one of Rupert's assistants started pouring and handing cups around.

"God bless the Queen," Frank Hart said and loaded and fired a flare past the end of the dock directly at the open door of Mr. Bobby's place. The flare hit the concrete wall beside the door, burst, and burned brightly on the coral road, lighting everything with a white light.

"Take it easy," Thomas Hudson said. "Those things can burn people."

"The hell with take it easy," Frank said. "Let me see if I can bag the Commissioner's house."

"You'll burn it," Roger told him.

"If I burn it I'll pay for it," Frank said.

The flare arced up toward the big white-perched house but it was short and burned brightly just this side of the Commissioner's front porch.

"Good old Commissioner," Frank reloaded. "That will show the bastard whether we're patriotic or not."

"Take it easy, Frank," Tom urged him. "We don't have to play rough."

"Tonight's my night," Frank said. "The Queen's night and mine. Get out of my way, Tom, while I nail Brown's dock."

"He's got gas on it," Roger said.

"Not for long," Frank told him.

It was impossible to tell whether he was trying to miss each shot to devil Roger and Thomas Hudson or whether he was really being bad. Neither Roger nor Thomas Hudson were sure either but they knew no one should be able to shoot a signal pistol with that much accuracy. And there was gas on the dock.

Frank stood up, took careful aim with his left arm down at his

side like a duelist, and fired. The flare hit the dock at the far end from where the gas drums were piled and ricocheted off into the channel.

"Hey," someone yelled from the boats that were tied up at Brown's. "What the hell?"

"Almost a perfect shot," Frank said. "Now I'm going to try for the Commissioner again."

"You better damn well cut it out," Thomas Hudson told him.

"Rupert," Frank called up, ignoring Thomas Hudson. "Let me have some of that, will you?"

"Yes sir, Captain Frank," Rupert said. "You got a cup?"

"Get me a cup," Frank said to Fred, who was standing watching.

"Yes *sir,* Mr. Frank."

Fred jumped and came back with the cup. His face was shining with excitement and pleasure.

"You figure to burn down the Commissioner, Mr. Frank?"

"Only if he catches fire," Frank said.

He handed the cup up to Rupert who three quarters filled it and reached it down.

"The Queen, God bless her," Frank drained the cup.

It was a terrific slug of rum to take like that.

"God bless her. God bless her, Captain Frank," Rupert said solemnly, and the others echoed, "God bless her. God bless her indeed."

"Now for the Commissioner," Frank said. He fired the signal pistol straight up in the air, a little into the wind. He had loaded with a parachute flare and the wind drifted the bright white light down over the cruiser astern.

"Sure missed Commissioner that time," Rupert said. "What's wrong, Captain Frank?"

"I wanted to illuminate this beautiful scene," Frank said. "No hurry about the Commissioner."

"Commissioner'd burn good, Captain Frank," Rupert advised. "I

don't want to influence you in it but it hasn't rained on island for two months and Commissioner's dry as tinder."

"Where's Constable?" Frank asked.

"Constable's keeping out of the way of things," Rupert said. "Don't you worry about Constable. Nobody on this dock would see shot if shot was fired."

"Everybody on this dock lay flat down on their faces and see nothing," a voice came from back in the crowd. "Nothing has been heard. Nothing will be seen."

"I give the command," Rupert urged. "Every face is averted." Then, encouragingly, "She's just as dry as tinder that old place."

"Let me see how you'd do it," Frank said.

He loaded with another parachute flare and fired up and into the wind. In the falling garish light everyone on the dock was lying face down or was on hands and knees with eyes covered.

"God bless you, Captain Frank," came Rupert's deep solemn voice out of the dark when the flare died. "May He in His infinite mercy give you courage to burn Commissioner."

"Where's his wife and children?" Frank asked.

"We get them out. Don't you worry," Rupert said. "No harm of any kind come to anyone innocent."

"Should we burn him?" Frank turned to the others in the cockpit.

"Oh, cut it out," Thomas Hudson said. "For Christ's sake."

"I'm leaving in the morning," Frank said. "As a matter of fact I'm cleared."

"Let's burn him," Fred Wilson said. "Natives seem to favor it."

"Burn him, Captain Frank," Rupert urged. "What do you say?" he asked the others.

"Burn him. Burn him. God give you strength to burn him," said the boys on the dock.

"Nobody want him unburned?" Frank asked them.

"Burn him, Captain Frank. Nobody see it. Nothing ever been

heard. Not a word's been said. Burn him."

"Need a few practice shots," Frank said.

"Get off this damned boat if you're going to burn him," Johnny said.

Frank looked at him and shook his head a little so that neither Roger nor the boys on the dock saw it.

"He's ashes now," he said. "Let me have just one more, Rupert, to stiffen my will."

He handed up the cup.

"Captain Frank," Rupert leaned down to speak to him. "This will be the deed of your life."

Up on the dock the boys had started a new song.

"Captain Frank in the harbor
Tonight's the night we got fun."

Then a pause, and pitched higher . . .

"Captain Frank in the harbor
Tonight's the night we got fun."

The second line was sung like a drum bonging. Then they went on:

"Commissioner called Rupert a dirty black hound
Captain Frank fired his flare pistol and burnt him to the ground."

Then they went back to the other old African rhythm four of the men in the launch had heard sung by the Negroes that pulled the ropes on the ferries that crossed the rivers along the coast road between Mombasa, Malindi, and Lamu where, as they pulled in unison, the Negroes sang improvised work songs that described and made fun of the white people they were carrying on the ferry.

"Captain Frank in the harbor
Tonight's the night we got fun.
Captain Frank in the harbor"

Defiant, insultingly, despairingly defiant the minor notes rose. Then the drum's bonging response.

"Tonight's the night we got fun!"

"You see, Captain Frank?" Rupert urged, leaning down into the cockpit. "You got the song already before you even commit the deed."

"I'm getting pretty committed," Frank said to Thomas Hudson. Then, "One more practice shot," he told Rupert.

"Practice makes perfect," Rupert said happily.

"Captain Frank's practicing now for the death," someone said on the dock.

"Captain Frank's wilder than a wild hog," came another voice.

"Captain Frank's a *man."*

"Rupert," Frank said. "Another cup of that, please. Not to encourage me. Just to help my aim."

"God guide you, Captain Frank," Rupert reached down the cup. "Sing the Captain Frank song, boys."

Frank drained the cup.

"The last practice shot," he said and firing just over the cabin cruiser lying astern he bounced the flare off Brown's gas drums and into the water.

"You son of a bitch," Thomas Hudson said to him very quietly.

"Shut up, christer," Frank said to Thomas Hudson. "That was my masterpiece."

Just then, in the cockpit of the other cruiser, a man came out onto the stern wearing pajama trousers with no top and shouted, "Listen, you swine! Stop it, will you? There's a lady trying to sleep down below."

“A lady?” Wilson asked.

“Yes, goddamn it, a lady,” the man said. “My wife. And you dirty bastards firing those flares to keep her awake and keep anybody from getting any sleep.”

“Why don’t you give her sleeping pills?” Frank said. “Rupert, send a boy for some sleeping pills.”

“Do you know what you do, colonel?” Wilson said. “Why don’t you just comport yourself as a good husband should? That’ll put her to sleep. She’s probably repressed. Maybe she’s thwarted. That’s what the analyst always tells my wife.”

They were very rough boys and Frank was way in the wrong but the man who had been pitching the drunk all day had gotten off to an exceedingly bad start with the approach he had taken. Neither John nor Roger nor Thomas Hudson had said a word. The other two, from the moment the man had come out onto the stern and yelled, “Swine,” had worked together like a really fast shortstop and second baseman.

“You filthy swine,” the man said. He did not seem to have much of a vocabulary and he looked between thirty-five and forty. It was hard to tell his age closely, even though he had switched on his cockpit lights. He looked much better than Thomas Hudson had expected him to look after hearing the stories all day and Thomas Hudson thought he must have gotten some sleep. Thomas Hudson remembered, then, that he had been sleeping at Bobby’s.

“I’d try Nembutal,” Frank told him very confidentially. “Unless she’s allergic to it.”

“I don’t see why she’s so dissatisfied,” Fred Wilson told him.

“Why you’re quite a fine-looking physical specimen. You really look pretty damned good. I’ll bet you’re the terror of the Racquet Club. What does it cost you to keep in that wonderful shape? Look at him, Frank. Did you ever see as expensive a looking top of a man as that?”

“You made a mistake though, governor,” Frank told him.

“You’re wearing the wrong end of your pajamas. Frankly I’ve never seen a man wearing that bottom part before. Do you really wear that to bed?”

“Can’t you filthy-mouthed swine let a lady sleep?” the man said.

“Why don’t you just go down below,” Frank said to him. You’re liable to get in trouble around here using all those epithets. You haven’t got your chauffeur here to look after you. Does your chauffeur always take you to school?”

“He doesn’t go to school, Frank,” Fred Wilson said, putting aside his guitar. “He’s a big grown-up boy. He’s a businessman. Can’t you recognize a big businessman?”

“Are you a businessman, sonny?” Frank asked. “Then you know it’s good business for you to run along down into your cabin. There isn’t any good business for you up here.”

“He’s right,” Fred Wilson said. “You haven’t any future around with us. Just go down to your cabin. You’ll get used to the noise.”

“You filthy swine,” the man said and looked at them all.

“Just take that beautiful body down below, will you?” Wilson said. “I’m sure you’ll get the lady to sleep.”

“You swine,” the man said. “You rotten swine.”

“Can’t you think up any other names?” Frank said. *“Swine’s* getting awfully dull. You better go down below before you catch cold. If I had a wonderful chest like that I wouldn’t risk it out here on a windy night like this.”

The man looked at them all as though he were memorizing them.

“You’ll be able to remember us,” Frank told him. “If not I’ll remind you any time I see you.”

“You filth,” the man said and turned and went below.

“Who is he?” Johnny Goodner asked. “I’ve seen him somewhere.”

“I know him and he knows me,” Frank said. “He’s no good.”

“Can’t you remember who he is?” Johnny asked.

“He’s a jerk,” Frank said. “What difference does it make who he is outside of that?”

“None, I guess,” Thomas Hudson said. “You two certainly swarmed on him.”

“That’s what you’re supposed to do with a jerk. Swarm on him. We weren’t really rude to him.”

“I thought you made your lack of sympathy clear,” Thomas Hudson said.

“I heard a dog barking,” Roger said. “The flares probably scared his dog. Let’s cut the flares out. I know you’re having fun, Frank. You’re getting away with murder and nothing bad’s happened. But why terrify the poor bloody dog?”

“That was his wife barking,” Frank said cheerily. “Let’s shoot one into his cabin and illuminate the whole domestic scene.”

“I’m getting the hell out of here,” Roger said. “You joke the way I don’t like. I don’t think jokes with motorcars are funny. I don’t think drunken flying is funny. I don’t think scaring dogs is funny.”

“Nobody’s keeping you,” Frank said. “Lately you’re a pain in the ass to everybody anyway.”

“Yes?”

“Sure. You and Tom christing around. Spoiling any fun. All you reformed bastards. You used to have plenty of fun. Now nobody can have any. You and your brand new social conscience.”

“So it’s social conscience if I think it would be better not to set Brown’s dock on fire?”

“Sure. It’s just a form of it. You’ve got it bad. I heard about you on the coast.”

“Why don’t you take your pistol and go play somewhere else?” Johnny Goodner said to Frank. “We were all having fun till you got so rough.”

“So you’ve got it, too,” Frank said.

“Take it a little easy,” Roger warned him.

“I’m the only guy here still likes to have any fun,” Frank said.

“All you big overgrown religious maniacs and social workers and hypocrites—”

“Captain Frank,” Rupert leaned down over the edge of the dock.

“Rupert’s my only friend,” Frank looked up. “Yes, Rupert?”

“Captain Frank, what about Commissioner?”

“We’ll burn him, Rupert old boy.”

“God bless you, Captain Frank,” Rupert said. “Care for any rum?”

“I’m fine, Rupert,” Frank told him. “Everybody down now.”

“Everybody down,” Rupert ordered. “Down flat.”

Frank fired over the edge of the dock and the flare lit on the graveled walk just short of the Commissioner’s porch and burned there. The boys on the dock groaned.

“Damn,” Rupert said. “You nearly made her. Bad luck. Reload, Captain Frank.”

The lights went on in the cockpit of the cruiser astern of them and the man was out there again. This time he had a white shirt and white duck trousers on and he wore sneakers. His hair was combed and his face was red with white patches. The nearest man to him in the stern was John, who had his back to him, and next to John was Roger who was just sitting there looking gloomy. There was about three feet of water between the two sterns and the man stood there and pointed his finger at Roger.

“You slob,” he said. “You rotten filthy slob.”

Roger just looked up at him with a surprised look.

“You mean me, don’t you?” Frank called to him. “And it’s swine, not slob.”

The man ignored him and went on at Roger.

“You big fat slob,” the man almost choked. “You phony. You faker. You cheap phony. You rotten writer and lousy painter.”

“Who are you talking to and about what?” Roger stood up.

“You. You slob. You phony you. You coward. Oh you slob. You filthy slob.”

“You’re crazy,” Roger said quietly.

“You slob,” the man said across the space of water that separated the two boats the same way someone might speak insultingly to an animal in one of those modern zoos where no bars, but only pits, separate the visitors from the beasts. “You phony.”

“He means me,” Frank said happily. “Don’t you know me? I’m the swine.”

“I mean you,” the man pointed his finger at Roger. “You phony.”

“Look,” Roger said to him. “You’re not talking to me at all. You’re just talking to be able to repeat back in New York what you said to me.”

He spoke reasonably and patiently as though he really wanted the man to understand and shut up.

“You slob,” the man shouted, working himself further and further into this hysteria he had even dressed up for. “You rotten filthy phony.”

“You’re not talking to me,” Roger repeated to him very quietly now and Thomas Hudson saw that he had decided. “So shut up now. If you want to talk to me get up on the dock.”

Roger started up for the dock and, oddly enough, the man came climbing up on the dock as fast as you please. He had talked himself into it and worked himself up to it. But he was doing it. The Negroes fell back and then closed in around the two of them leaving plenty of room.

Thomas Hudson didn’t know what the man expected to happen when he got up on the dock. No one said anything and there were all those black faces around him and he took a swing at Roger and Roger hit him in the mouth with a left and his mouth started to bleed. He swung at Roger again and Roger hooked him hard to the right eye twice. He grabbed hold of Roger and Roger’s sweatshirt tore when he dug the man in the belly hard with his right and then pushed him away and slapped him hard across the face backhand with his open left hand.

None of the Negroes had said a word. They just kept the two men surrounded and gave them plenty of room. Someone, Tom thought it was John's boy Fred, had turned the dock lights on and you could see well.

Roger went after the man and hooked him three times fast to the head high up. The man grabbed him and his sweatshirt tore again as he pushed him away and jabbed him twice in the mouth.

"Cut out those lefts," Frank yelled. "Throw your right and cool the son of a bitch. Cool him."

"Got anything to say to me?" Roger said to the man and hooked him hard on the mouth. The man was bleeding badly from the mouth and the whole right side of his face was coming up and his right eye was almost closed.

The man grabbed Roger and Roger held him inside and steadied him. The man was breathing hard and he hadn't said anything. Roger had a thumb on the inside of the man's two elbows and Tom could see him rubbing the thumbs back and forth over the tendons between the biceps and the forearms.

"Don't you bleed on me, you son of a bitch," Roger said, and brought his left hand up fast and loose and knocked the man's head back and then backhanded him across the face again.

"You can get a new nose now," he said.

"Cool him, Roger. Cool him," Frank pled with him.

"Can't you see what he's doing, you dope?" Fred Wilson said. "He's ruining him."

The man grabbed Roger and Roger held him and pushed him away.

"Hit me," he said. "Come on. Hit me."

The man swung at him and Roger ducked it and grabbed him.

"What's your name?" he said to the man.

The man didn't answer. All he did was breathe as though he were dying with asthma.

Roger was holding the man again with his thumbs pressing in on

the inside of his elbows. “You’re a strong son of a bitch,” he said to the man. “Who the hell ever told you you could fight?”

The man swung at him weakly and Roger grabbed him, pulled him forward, spun him a little, and clubbed him twice on the ear with the base of his right fist.

“You think you’ve learned not to talk to people?” he asked the man.

“Look at his ear,” Rupert said. “Like a bunch of grapes.” Roger was holding the man again with his thumbs pushing in against the tendons at the base of the biceps. Thomas Hudson was watching the man’s face. It had not been frightened at the start; just mean as a pig’s is; a really mean boar. But it was really completely frightened now. He had probably never heard of fights that no one stopped. Probably he thought in some part of his mind about the stories he had read where men were kicked to death if they went down. He still tried to fight. Each time Roger told him to hit him or pushed him away he tried to throw a punch. He hadn’t quit.

Roger pushed him away. The man stood there and looked at him. When Roger wasn’t holding him in that way that made him feel absolutely helpless the fear drained away a little and the meanness came back. He stood there frightened, badly hurt, his face destroyed, his mouth bleeding, and that ear looking like an overripe fig as the small individual hemorrhages united into one great swelling inside the skin. As he stood there, Roger’s hands off him now, the fear drained and the indestructible meanness welled up.

“Anything to say?” Roger asked him.

“Slob,” the man said. As he said it, he pulled his chin in and put his hands up and turned half away in a gesture an incorrigible child might make.

“Now it comes,” Rupert shouted. “Now it’s going to roll.”

But it was nothing dramatic nor scientific. Roger stepped quickly over to where the man stood and raised his left shoulder and dropped his right fist down and swung it up so it smashed against

the side of the man's head. He went down on his hands and knees, his forehead resting on the dock. He knelt there a little while with his forehead against the planking and then he went gently over on his side. Roger looked at him and then came over to the edge of the dock and swung down into the cockpit.

The crew of the man's yacht were carrying him on board. They had not intervened in what had happened on the dock and they had picked him up from where he lay on his side on the dock and carried him sagging heavily. Some of the Negroes had helped them lower him down to the stern and take him below. They shut the door after they took him in.

"He ought to have a doctor," Thomas Hudson said.

"He didn't hit hard on the dock," Roger said. "I thought about the dock."

"I don't think that last crack alongside the ear did him a lot of good," Johnny Goodner said.

"You ruined his face," Frank said. "And that ear. I never saw an ear come up so fast. First it was like a bunch of grapes and then it was as full as an orange."

"Bare hands are a bad thing," Roger said. "People don't have any idea what they'll do. I wish I'd never seen him."

"Well, you'll never see him again without being able to recognize him."

"I hope he'll come around," Roger said.

"It was a beautiful fight, Mr. Roger," Fred said.

"Fight, hell," Roger said. "Why the hell did that have to happen?"

"The gentleman certainly brought it on himself," Fred said.

"Cut out worrying, will you?" Frank said to Roger. "I've seen hundreds of guys cooled and that guy is OK."

Up on the dock the boys were drifting away commenting on the fight. There had been something about the way the white man had looked when he was carried aboard that they did not like and all

the bravery about burning the Commissioner's house was evaporating.

"Well, good night, Captain Frank," Rupert said.

"Going, Rupert?" Frank asked him.

"Thought we might all go up see what's going on at Mr. Bobby's."

"Good night, Rupert," said Roger. "See you tomorrow."

Roger was feeling very low and his left hand was swollen as big as a grapefruit. His right was puffed too but not as badly. There was nothing else to show he had been in a fight except that the neck of his sweatshirt was ripped open and flapped down on his chest. The man had hit him once high up on his head and there was a small bump there. John put some Mercurochrome on the places where his knuckles were skinned and cut. Roger didn't even look at his hands.

"Let's go up to Bobby's place and see if there's any fun," Frank said.

"Don't worry about anything, Roge," Fred Wilson said and climbed up on the dock. "Only suckers worry."

They went on along the dock carrying their guitar and banjo toward where the light and the singing were coming out of the open door of the Ponce de León.

"Freddy is a pretty good joe," John said to Thomas Hudson.

"He always was," Thomas Hudson said. "But he and Frank are bad together."

Roger did not say anything and Thomas Hudson was worried about him; about him and about other things.

"Don't you think we might turn in?" he said to him. "I'm still spooked about that character," Roger said.

He was sitting with his back toward the stern, looking glum and holding his left hand in his right.

"Well you don't have to be anymore," John spoke very quietly. "He's walking around now."

"Really?"

“He’s coming out now and he’s carrying a shotgun.”

“I’ll be a sad son of a bitch,” Roger said. But his voice was happy again. He sat with his back toward the stern and never turned around to look.

The man came out to the stern this time wearing both a pajama top and trousers, but what you saw was the shotgun. Thomas Hudson looked away from it and to his face and his face was very bad. Someone had worked on it and there was gauze and tape over the cheeks and a lot of Mercurochrome had been used. They hadn’t been able to do anything about his ear. Thomas Hudson imagined it must have hurt to have anything touch it, and it just stood out looking very taut and swollen and it had become the dominant feature of his face. No one said anything and the man just stood there with his spoiled face and his shotgun. He probably could not see anyone very clearly the way his eyes were puffed tight. He stood there and he did not say anything and neither did anyone else.

Roger turned his head very slowly, saw him, and spoke over his shoulder.

“Go put the gun away and go to bed.”

The man stood there with the gun. His swollen lips were working but he did not say anything.

“You’re mean enough to shoot a man in the back but you haven’t got the guts,” Roger spoke over his shoulder very quietly. “Go put the gun away and go to bed.”

Roger still sat there with his back toward the man. Then he took what Thomas Hudson thought was an awful chance.

“Doesn’t he remind you just a little bit of Lady Macbeth coming out there in his nightclothes?” he asked the three others in the stern.

Thomas Hudson waited for it then. But nothing happened and after a while the man turned and went down into the cabin taking the shotgun with him.

“I feel very, very much better,” Roger said. “I could feel that sweat run clean down from my armpit and onto my leg. Let’s go home, Tom. Man’s OK.”

“Not too awfully OK,” Johnny said.

“OK enough,” Roger said. “What a human being that is.”

“Come on, Roger,” Thomas Hudson said. “Come on up to my place for a while.”

“All right.”

They said good night to John and walked up the King’s Highway toward the house. There was still plenty of celebrating going on.

“Do you want to go into the Ponce?” Thomas Hudson asked.

“Hell no,” Roger said.

“I thought I’d tell Freddy the man’s OK.”

“You tell him. I’ll go on to your house.”

When Thomas Hudson got home Roger was lying face down on a bed in the far up-island end of the screen porch. It was dark and you could just barely hear the noise of the celebrating.

“Sleeping?” Thomas Hudson asked him.

“No.”

“Would you like a drink?”

“I don’t think so. Thanks.”

“How’s the hand?”

“Just swelled and sore. It’s nothing.”

“You feeling low again?”

“Yes. I’ve got it bad.”

“The kids will be here in the morning.”

“That will be fine.”

“You’re sure you wouldn’t like a drink?”

“No, kid. But you have one.”

“I’ll have a whisky and soda to go to sleep on.”

Thomas Hudson went to the icebox, mixed the drink, and came back out to the screened porch and sat there in the dark with Roger lying on the bed.

“You know, there’s an awful lot of real bastards loose,” Roger said. “That guy was no good, Tom.”

“You taught him something.”

“No. I don’t think so. I humiliated him and I ruined him a little. But he’ll take it out on someone else.”

“He brought it on.”

“Sure. But I didn’t finish it.”

“You did everything but kill him.”

“That’s what I mean. He’ll just be worse now.”

“I think maybe you taught him a hell of a lesson.”

“No. I don’t think so. It was the same thing out on the coast.”

“What really happened? You haven’t told me anything since you got back.”

“It was a fight, sort of like this one.”

“Who with?”

He named a man who was very high up in what is known as the industry.

“I didn’t want any part of it,” Roger said. “It was out at the house where I was having some woman trouble and I suppose, technically, I shouldn’t have been there. But that night I took it and took it and took it from this character. Much worse than tonight. Finally I just couldn’t take it anymore and I gave it to him, really gave it to him without thinking about anything, and his head hit wrong on the marble steps going down to the pool. This was all by the pool. He came out of it at the Cedars of Lebanon finally about the third day and so I missed manslaughter. But they had it all set. With the witnesses they had I’d have been lucky to get that.”

“So then what?”

“So then, after he’s back on the job, I get the real frameroo. The full-sized one. Complete with handles.”

“What was it?”

“Everything. In series.”

“Want to tell me?”

“No. It wouldn’t be useful to you. Just take my word for it that it was a frame. It’s so awful nobody mentions it. Haven’t you noticed?”

“Sort of.”

“So I wasn’t feeling so good about tonight. There’s a lot of wickeds at large. Really bads. And hitting them is no solution. I think that’s one reason why they provoke you.” He turned over on the bed and lay face up. “You know evil is a hell of a thing, Tommy. And it’s smart as a pig. You know they had something in the old days about good and evil.”

“Plenty of people wouldn’t classify you as a straight good,” Thomas Hudson told him.

“No. Nor do I claim to be. Nor even good nor anywhere near good. I wish I were though. Being against evil doesn’t make you good. Tonight I was against it and then I was evil myself. I could feel it coming in just like a tide.”

“All fights are bad.”

“I know it. But what are you going to do about them?”

“You have to win them when they start.”

“Sure. But I was taking pleasure in it from the minute it started.”

“You would have taken more pleasure if he could have fought.”

“I hope so,” Roger said. “Though I don’t know now. I just want to destroy them. But when you start taking pleasure in it you are awfully close to the thing you’re fighting.”

“He was an awful type,” Thomas Hudson said.

“He couldn’t have been any worse than the last one on the coast. The trouble is, Tommy, there are so many of them. They have them in all countries and they are getting bigger all the time. Times aren’t good, Tommy.”

“When did you ever see them good?”

“We always had good times.”

“Sure. We had good times in all sorts of good places. But the times weren’t good.”

“I never knew,” Roger said. “Everybody claimed they were good and then everybody was busted. I didn’t have any money when they all had it. Then when I had some was when things were really bad. But people didn’t always seem as goddamnned mean and evil though.”

“You’ve been going around with awful people, too.”

“I see some good ones once in a while.”

“Not very many.”

“Sure I do. You don’t know all my friends.”

“You run with a pretty seedy lot.”

“Whose friends were those tonight? Your friends or my friends?”

“Our friends. They’re not so bad. They’re worthless but they’re not really evil.”

“No,” said Roger. “I guess not. Frank is pretty bad. Bad enough. I don’t think he’s evil though. But there’s a lot of stuff I can’t take anymore. And he and Fred eviled up awfully fast.”

“I know about good and evil. I’m not trying to misunderstand nor play dumb.”

“I don’t know much about good because I’ve always been a failure at it. That evil is my dish. I can recognize that old evil.”

“I’m sorry tonight turned out so lousy.”

“I’m just feeling low.”

“Do you want to turn in? You better sleep here.”

“Thanks. I will if you don’t mind. But I think I’ll go in the library and read for a while. Where are those Australian stories you had the last time I was here?”

“Henry Lawson’s?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll get them.”

Thomas Hudson went to bed and when he woke in the night the light was still on in the library.

V

When Thomas Hudson woke there was a light east breeze blowing and out across the flats the sand was bone white under the blue sky and the small high clouds that were traveling with the wind made dark moving patches on the green water. The wheel of the wind charger was turning in the breeze and it was a fine fresh-feeling morning.

Roger was gone and Thomas Hudson breakfasted by himself and read the Maryland paper that had come across yesterday. He had put it away without reading it to save it for breakfast.

"What time the boys coming in?" Joseph asked.

"Around noon."

"They'll be here for lunch though?"

"Yes."

"Mr. Roger was gone when I came," Joseph said. "He didn't have any breakfast."

"Maybe he'll be in now."

"Boy said he see him go off sculling in the dinghy."

After Thomas Hudson had finished breakfast and the paper he went out on the porch on the ocean side and went to work. He worked well and was nearly finished when he heard Roger come in and come up the stairs.

Roger looked over his shoulder and said, "It's going to be good."

"Maybe."

"Where did you see those waterspouts?"

"I never saw these. These are some I'm doing to order. How's your hand?"

“Still puffy.”

Roger watched him work and he did not turn around.

“If it wasn’t for the hand that would all seem just like a nasty dream.”

“Pretty nasty one.”

“Do you suppose that guy really did come out with a shotgun?”

“I don’t know,” Thomas Hudson said. “And I don’t care.”

“Sorry,” Roger said. “Want me to go?”

“No. Stick around. I’m about through. I won’t pay any attention to you.”

“They got away at first light,” Roger said. “I saw them go.”

“What were you doing up then?”

“I couldn’t sleep after I stopped reading and I wasn’t very good company for myself so I went down to the docks and sat around with some of the boys. The Ponce never did close up. I saw Joseph.”

“Joseph said you were out sculling.”

“Right-hand sculling. Trying to exercise it out. I did too. Feel fine now.”

“That’s about all I can do now,” Thomas Hudson said and started to clean up and put the gear away. “The kids will be just about taking off now.” He looked at his watch. “Why don’t we just have a quick one?”

“Fine. I could use one.”

“It isn’t quite twelve.”

“I don’t think that makes any difference. You’re through working and I’m on a vacation. But maybe we better wait till twelve if that’s your rule.”

“All right.”

“I’ve been keeping that rule too. It’s an awful nuisance some mornings when a drink would make you feel all right.”

“Let’s break it,” Thomas Hudson said. “I get awfully excited when I know I’m going to see them,” he explained.

“I know.”

"Joe," Roger called. "Bring the shaker and rig for martinis."

"Yes *sir*. I got her rigged now."

"What did you rig so early for? Do you think we are rummies?"

"No sir, Mr. Roger. I figured that was what you were saving that empty stomach for."

"Here's to us and the kids," Roger said.

"They ought to have fun this year. You better stay up here too. You can always get away to the shack if they get on your nerves."

"I'll stay up here part of the time if I don't bother you."

"You don't bother me."

"It will be wonderful to have them."

It was too. They were good kids and now they had been at the house for a week. The tuna run was over and there were few boats at the island now and the life was slow and normal again and the weather was early summer.

The boys slept on cots on the screened porch and it is much less lonely sleeping when you can hear children breathing when you wake in the night. The nights were cool from the breeze that came across the banks and when the breeze fell it would be cool from the sea.

The boys had been a little shy when they first came and much neater than they were later. But there was no great neatness problem if you had them rinse the sand from their feet before they came into the house and hang their wet swimming shorts outside and put on dry ones in the house. Joseph aired their pajamas when he made up the cots in the morning and after sunning them folded the pajamas and put them away and there were only the shirts and the sweaters they wore in the evening to be scattered around. That, at least, was how it was in principle. Actually every sort of gear they owned was scattered all over everywhere. Thomas Hudson did not mind it. When a man lives in a house by himself he gets very precise habits and they get to be a pleasure. But it felt good to have some of them broken up. He knew he would have his habits again

long after he would no longer have the boys.

Sitting on the sea porch working he could see the biggest one and the middle-sized one and the small one lying on the beach with Roger. They were talking, and digging in the sand, and arguing but he could not hear what they were saying.

The biggest boy was long and dark with Thomas Hudson's neck and shoulders and the long swimmer's legs and big feet. He had a rather Indian face and was a happy boy although in repose his face looked almost tragic.

Thomas Hudson had looked at him when his face had that sad look and asked, "What are you thinking about, Schatz?"

"Fly-tying," the boy would say, his face lighting instantly. It was the eyes and the mouth that made it tragic-looking when he was thinking and, when he spoke, they brought it to life.

The middle boy always reminded Thomas Hudson of an otter. He had the same color hair as an otter's fur and it had almost the same texture as that of an underwater animal and he browned all over in a strange dark gold tan. He always reminded his father of the sort of animal that has a sound and humorous life by itself. Otters and bears are the animals that joke most and bears, of course, are very close to men. This boy would never be wide enough and strong enough to be a bear and he would never be an athlete, nor did he want to be; but he had a lovely small-animal quality and he had a good mind and a life of his own. He was affectionate and he had a sense of justice and was good company. He was also a Cartesian doubter and an avid arguer and he teased well and without meanness although sometimes he teased toughly. He had other qualities no one knew about and the other two boys respected him immensely although they tried to tease him and tear him down on any point where he was vulnerable. Naturally they had rows among themselves and they teased each other with considerable malice, but they were well mannered and respectful with grown-ups.

The smallest boy was fair and was built like a pocket battleship. He was a copy of Thomas Hudson, physically, reduced in scale and widened and shortened. His skin freckled when it tanned and he had a humorous face and was born being very old. He was a devil too, and deviled both his older brothers, and he had a dark side to him that nobody except Thomas Hudson could ever understand. Neither of them thought about this except that they recognized it in each other and knew it was bad and the man respected it and understood the boy's having it. They were very close to each other although Thomas Hudson had never been as much with this boy as with the others. This youngest boy, Andrew, was a precocious excellent athlete and he had been marvelous with horses since he had first ridden. The other boys were very proud of him but they did not want any nonsense from him, either. He was a little unbelievable and anyone could well have doubted his feats except that many people had seen him ride and watched him jump and seen his cold, professional modesty. He was a boy born to be quite wicked who was being very good and he carried his wickedness around with him transmuted into a sort of teasing gaiety. But he was a bad boy and the others knew it and he knew it. He was just being good while his badness grew inside him.

There, below the sea porch, the four of them were lying on the sand with the oldest boy, young Tom, on one side of Roger and the smallest one, Andrew, next to him on the middle side and the middle one, David, stretched out next to Tom on his back with his eyes closed. Thomas Hudson cleaned up his gear and went down to join them.

"Hi, papa," the oldest boy said. "Did you work well?"

"Are you going to swim, papa?" asked the middle boy.

"The water's pretty good, papa," the youngest boy said.

"How are you, father?" Roger grinned. "How's the painting business, Mr. Hudson?"

"Painting business is over for the day, gentlemen."

“Oh, swell,” said David, the middle boy. “Do you think we can go goggle-fishing?”

“Let’s go after lunch.”

“That’s wonderful,” the big boy said.

“Won’t it maybe be too rough?” Andrew, the youngest boy, asked.

“For you, maybe,” his oldest brother, Tom, told him.

“No, Tommy. For anyone.”

“They stay in the rocks when it’s rough,” David said.

“They’re afraid of the surge the same way we are. I think it makes them seasick too. Papa, don’t fish get seasick?”

“Sure,” Thomas Hudson said. “Sometimes in the live-well of a smack in rough weather the groupers will get so seasick that they die.”

“Didn’t I tell you?” David asked his older brother.

“They get sick and they die,” young Tom said. “But what proves that it’s seasick?”

“I think you could say they were really seasick,” Thomas Hudson said. “I don’t know whether they would be if they could swim freely, though.”

“But don’t you see that in the reef they can’t swim freely either, papa?” David said. “They have their holes and certain places they move out in. But they have to stay in the holes for fear of bigger fish and the surge bangs them around just the way it would if they were in the well of a smack.”

“Not quite as much,” young Tom disagreed.

“Maybe not quite as much,” David admitted judiciously.

“But enough,” Andrew said. He whispered to his father, “If they keep it up, we won’t have to go.”

“Don’t you like it?”

“I like it wonderful but I’m scared of it.”

“What scares you?”

“Everything underwater. I’m scared as soon as I let my air out.

Tommy can swim wonderfully but he's scared underwater too. David's the only one of us that isn't scared underwater."

"I'm scared lots of times," Thomas Hudson told him.

"Are you really?"

"Everybody is, I think."

"David isn't. No matter where it is. But David's scared now of horses because they threw him so many times."

"Listen, punk," David had heard him. *"How* was I thrown?"

"I don't know. It was so many times I don't remember."

"Well let me tell you. I know how I was thrown so much. When I used to ride Old Paint that year he used to swell himself up when they cinched him and then later the saddle would slip with me."

"I never had that trouble with him," Andrew said smartly.

"Oh, the devil," David said. "Probably he liked you like everybody does. Maybe somebody told him who you were."

"I used to read out loud to him about me out of the papers," Andrew said.

"I'll bet he went off on a dead run then," Thomas Hudson said. "You know what happened to David was that he started to ride that old broken-down quarter horse that got sound on us and there wasn't any place for the horse to run. Horses aren't supposed to go like that across that sort of country."

"I wasn't saying I could have ridden him, papa," Andrew said.

"You better not," David said. Then, "Oh hell, you probably could have. Sure you could have. But honestly, Andy, you don't know how he used to be going before I would spook. I was spooked of the saddle horn. Oh the hell with it. I was spooked."

"Papa, do we actually have to go goggle-fishing?" Andrew asked.

"Not if it's too rough."

"Who decides if it's too rough?"

"I decide."

"Good," Andy said. "It certainly looks too rough to me."

“Papa, have you still got Old Paint out at the ranch?” Andy asked.

“I believe so,” Thomas Hudson said. “I rented the ranch, you know.”

“Really?”

“Yes. The end of last year.”

“But we can still go there, can’t we?” David asked quickly.

“Oh sure. We have the big cabin on the beach down by the river.”

“The ranch is the best place I was ever at,” Andy said. “Outside of here, of course.”

“I thought you used to like Rochester best,” David teased him. That was where he used to be left with his nurse when she stayed with her family in the summer months when the other boys went west.

“I did, too. Rochester was a wonderful place.”

“Do you remember when we came home that fall the time we killed the three grizzlies and you tried to tell him about it, Dave, and what he said?” Thomas Hudson asked.

“No, papa. I can’t remember exactly that far back.”

“It was in the butler’s pantry where you guys ate and you were having children’s supper and telling him about it and Anna was saying, ‘Oh my gracious, David, that must have been exciting. And what did you do *then?’* and this wicked old man, he must have been about five or six then, spoke up and said, ‘Well that’s probably very interesting, David, to people who are interested in that sort of thing. But we don’t have grizzlies in Rochester.’”

“See, horseman?” David said. “How you were then?”

“All right, papa,” Andrew said. “Tell him about when he would read nothing but the funny papers and read funny papers on the trip through the Everglades and wouldn’t look at anything after he went to that school the fall we were in New York and got to be a heel.”

“I remember it,” David said. “Papa doesn’t have to tell it.”

“You came out of it all right,” Thomas Hudson said.

“I had to, I guess. It certainly would have been something pretty bad to have stayed in.”

“Tell them about when I was little,” young Tom said, rolling over and taking hold of David’s ankle. “I’ll never get to be as good in real life as the stories about me when I was little.”

“I knew you when you were little,” Thomas Hudson said. “You were quite a strange character then.”

“He was just strange because he lived in strange places,” the smallest boy said. “I could have been strange in Paris and Spain and Austria.”

“He’s strange now, horseman,” David said. “He doesn’t need any exotic backgrounds.”

“What’s exotic backgrounds?”

“What you haven’t got.”

“I’ll bet I’ll have them, then.”

“Shut up and let papa tell,” young Tom said. “Tell them about when you and I used to go around together in Paris.”

“You weren’t so strange then,” Thomas Hudson said. “As a baby you were an awfully sound character. Mother and I used to leave you in the crib that was made out of a clothes basket in that flat where we lived over the sawmill and F. Puss the big cat would curl up in the foot of the basket and wouldn’t let anybody come near you. You said your name was G’Ning G’Ning and we used to call you G’Ning G’Ning the Terrible.”

“Where did I get a name like that?”

“Off a street car or an autobus I think. The sound the conductor made.”

“Couldn’t I speak French?”

“Not too well then.”

“Tell me about a little later by the time I could speak French.”

“Later on I used to wheel you in the carriage, it was a cheap,

very light, folding carriage, down the street to the Closerie des Lilas where we'd have breakfast and I'd read the paper and you'd watch everything that went past on the boulevard. Then we'd finish breakfast—"

"What would we have?"

"Brioche and café au lait."

"Me too?"

"You'd just have a taste of coffee in the milk."

"I can remember. Where would we go then?"

"I'd wheel you across the street from the Closerie des Lilas and past the fountain with the bronze horses and the fish and the mermaids and down between the long *allées* of chestnut trees with the French children playing and their nurses on the benches beside the gravel paths—"

"And the École Alsacienne on the left," young Tom said.

"And apartment buildings on the right—"

"And apartment buildings and apartments with glass roofs for studios all along the street that goes down to the left and quite triste from the darkness of the stone because that was the shady side," young Tom said.

"Is it fall or spring or winter?" Thomas Hudson asked.

"Late fall."

"Then you were cold in the face, and your cheeks and your nose were red and we would go into the Luxembourg through the iron gate at the upper end and down toward the lake and around the lake once and then turn to the right toward the Medici Fountain and the statues and out of the gate in front of the Odéon and down a couple of side streets to the Boulevard Saint-Michel—"

"The Boul' Mich'—"

"And down the Boul' Mich' past the Cluny—"

"On our right—"

"That was very dark and gloomy looking and across the Boulevard Saint-Germain—"

“That was the most exciting street with the most traffic. It’s strange how exciting and dangerous seeming it was there. And down by the Rue de Rennes it always seemed perfectly safe—between the Deux Magots and Lipp’s crossing I mean. Why was that, Papa?”

“I don’t know, Schatz.”

“I wish something would happen beside the names of streets,” Andrew said. “I get tired of the names of streets in a place I’ve never been.”

“Make something happen, then, papa,” young Tom said.

“We can talk about streets when we’re alone.”

“Nothing much happened then,” Thomas Hudson said. “We would go on down to the Place Saint-Michel and we would sit on the terrace of the café and Papa would sketch with a *café crème* on the table and you’d have a beer.”

“Did I like beer then?”

“You were a big beer man. But you liked water with a little red wine in it at meals.”

“I remember. *L’eau rougie.”*

“Exactement” Thomas Hudson said. “You were a very strong *l’eau rougie* man but you liked an occasional *bock.”*

“I can remember in Austria going on a *luge* and our dog Schnautz and snow.”

“Can you remember Christmas there?”

“No. Just you and snow and our dog Schnautz and my nurse. She was beautiful. And I remember mother on skis and how beautiful she was. I can remember seeing you and mother coming down skiing through an orchard. I don’t know where it was. But I can remember the Jardin du Luxembourg well. I can remember afternoons with the boats on the lake by the fountain in the big garden with the trees. The paths through the trees were all gravelled and men played bowling games off to the left under the trees as we went down toward the Palace and there was a clock

high up on the Palace. In the fall the leaves came down and I can remember the trees bare and the leaves on the gravel. I like to remember the fall best."

"Why?" David asked.

"Lots of things. The way everything smelled in the fall and the carnivals and the way the gravel was dry on top when everything was damp and the wind on the lake to sail the boats and the wind in the trees that brought the leaves down. I can remember feeling the pigeons by me warm under the blanket when you killed them just before it was dark and how the feathers were smooth and I would stroke them and hold them close and keep my hands warm going home until the pigeons got cold too."

"Where did you kill the pigeons, papa?" David asked.

"Mostly down by the Medici Fountain just before they shut the gardens. There's a high iron fence all around the gardens and they shut the gates at dark and everyone has to go out. Guards go through warning people and locking up the gates. After the guards went ahead I used to kill the pigeons with a slingshot when they were on the ground by the fountain. They make wonderful slingshots in France."

"Didn't you make your own if you were poor?" Andrew asked.

"Sure. First I had one I made from a forked branch of a sapling I cut down in the Forest of Rambouillet when Tommy's mother and I were on a walking trip there. I whittled it out and we bought the big rubber bands for it at a stationery store on the Place Saint-Michel and made the leather pouch out of leather from an old glove of Tommy's mother."

"What did you shoot in it?"

"Pebbles."

"How close would you have to get?"

"As close as you could so you could pick them up and get them under the blanket as quick as you could."

"I remember the time one came alive," young Tom said.

“And I held him quiet and didn’t say anything about it all the way home because I wanted to keep him. He was a very big pigeon, almost purple color with a high neck and a wonderful head and white on his wings, and you let me keep him in the kitchen until we could get a cage for him. You tied him by one leg. But that night the big cat killed him and brought him in to my bed. The big cat was so proud and he carried him just as though he were a tiger carrying a native and he jumped up to the bed with him. That was when I had a square bed after the basket. I can’t remember the basket. You and mother were gone to the café and the big cat and I were alone and I remember the windows were open and there was a big moon over the sawmill and it was winter and I could smell the sawdust. I remember seeing the big cat coming across the floor with his head high up so the pigeon barely dragged on the floor and then he made one jump and just sailed right up and into the bed with him. I felt awfully that he had killed my pigeon but he was so proud and so happy and he was such a good friend of mine I felt proud and happy, too. I remember he played with the pigeon and then he would push his paws up and down on my chest and purr and then play with the pigeon again. Finally I remember he and I and the pigeon all went to sleep together. I had one hand on the pigeon and he had one paw on the pigeon and then in the night I woke up and he was eating him and purring loud like a tiger.”

“That’s a lot better than names of streets,” Andrew said. “Were you scared, Tommy, when he was eating him?”

“No. The big cat was the best friend I had then. I mean the closest friend. I think he would have liked me to eat the pigeon too.”

“You ought to have tried it,” Andrew said. “Tell some more about slingshots.”

“Mother gave you the other slingshot for Christmas,” young Tom said. “She saw it in a gun store and she wanted to buy you a shotgun but she never had enough money. She used to look at the

shotguns in the window every day when she went past the store to the Epicerie and one day she saw the slingshot and she bought it because she was afraid they would sell it to somebody else and she kept it hid until Christmas. She had to falsify the accounts so you wouldn't know about it. She's told me about it lots of times. I can remember when you got it for Christmas and you gave me the old one. But I wasn't strong enough to pull it then."

"Papa, weren't we ever poor?" Andrew asked.

"No. I'd gotten over being poor by the time you guys were born. We were broke lots of times but never really poor the way we were with Tom and his mother."

"Tell us some more about in Paris," David said. "What else did you and Tommy do?"

"What did we do, Schatz?"

"In the fall? We used to buy roasted chestnuts from a roast chestnut man and I used to keep my hands warm on them too. We went to the circus and saw the crocodiles of Le Capitaine Wahl."

"Can you remember that?"

"Very well. The Capitaine Wahl wrestled with a crocodile (he pronounced it crowcodeel, the crow as in the bird of that name) and a beautiful girl poked them with a trident. But the biggest crocodiles wouldn't move. The circus was beautiful and round and red with gold paint and smelled of horses. There was a place in back where you went to drink with Mr. Crosby and the tamer of lions and his wife."

"Do you remember Mr. Crosby?"

"He never wore a hat nor an overcoat no matter how cold it was and his little girl had hair that hung down her back like Alice in Wonderland. In the illustrations I mean. Mr. Crosby was always very very nervous."

"Who else do you remember?"

"Mr. Joyce."

"What was he like?"

"He was tall and thin and he had a moustache and a small beard that grew straight up and down on his chin and he wore thick, thick glasses and walked with his head held very high. I remember him passing us on the street and not speaking and you spoke to him and he stopped and saw us through the glasses like looking out of an aquarium and he said, 'Ah, Hudson, I was looking for you,' and we three went to the café and it was cold outside but we sat in a corner with one of those what do you call thems?"

"Braziers."

"I thought that was what ladies wore," Andrew said.

"It's an iron can with holes in it they burn coal or charcoal in to heat any place outside like a café terrace where you sit close to them to keep warm or a race track where you stand around and get warm from them," young Tom explained. "At this café where papa and I and Mr. Joyce used to go they had them all along the outside and you could be warm and comfortable in the coldest weather."

"I guess you've spent the biggest part of your life in cafés and saloons and hot spots," the youngest boy said.

"Quite a bit of it," Tom said. "Haven't we, papa?"

"And sound asleep in the car outside while papa has just a quick one," David said. "Boy, I used to hate that word *quick one.* I guess a quick one is about the slowest thing on earth."

"What did Mr. Joyce talk about?" Roger asked young Tom. "Gee, Mr. Davis, I can't remember much about that time. I think it was about Italian writers and about Mr. Ford. Mr. Joyce couldn't stand Mr. Ford. Mr. Pound had gotten on his nerves, too. 'Ezra's mad, Hudson,' he said to papa. I can remember that because I thought *mad* meant *mad* like a *mad dog* and I remember sitting there and watching Mr. Joyce's face, it was sort of red with awfully smooth skin, cold weather skin, and his glasses that had one lens even thicker than the other, and thinking of Mr. Pound with his red hair and his pointed beard and his nice eyes, with white stuff sort of like lather dripping out of his mouth. I thought it was terrible Mr.

Pound was mad and I hoped we wouldn't run into him. Then Mr. Joyce said, 'Of course Ford's been mad for years,' and I saw Mr. Ford with his big, pale, funny face and his pale eyes and his mouth with the teeth loose in it and always about half open and that awful lather dripping down *his* jaws too."

"Don't say any more," Andrew said. "I'll dream about it."

"Go on please," David said. "It's like werewolves. Mother locked up the werewolf book because Andrew had such bad dreams."

"Did Mr. Pound ever bite anybody?" Andrew asked.

"No, horseman," David told him. "It's just a way of talking. He means mad out of his head mad. Not hydrophobia mad. Why did he think they were mad?"

"I can't tell you," young Tom said. "I wasn't as young then as when we used to shoot the pigeons in the gardens. But I was too young to remember everything and the idea of Mr. Pound and Mr. Ford with that dreadful slaver coming out of their mouths all ready to bite, drove everything out of my head. Did you know Mr. Joyce, Mr. Davis?"

"Yes. He and your father and I were very good friends."

"Papa was much younger than Mr. Joyce."

"Papa was younger than anybody, then."

"Not than me," young Tom said proudly. "I figure I was probably about Mr. Joyce's youngest friend."

"I'll bet he misses you a lot," Andrew said.

"It certainly is a shame he never could have met you," David said to Andrew. "If you hadn't been hanging around Rochester all the time he could have had the privilege."

"Mr. Joyce was a great man," young Tom said. "He wouldn't have wanted to have anything to do with you two punks."

"That's your opinion," Andrew said. "Mr. Joyce and David might have been pals. David writes for the paper at school."

"Papa, tell us some more about when you and Tommy and Tommy's mother were poor. How poor did you ever get?"

“They were pretty poor,” Roger said. “I can remember when your father used to make up all young Tom’s bottles in the morning and go to the market to buy the best and the cheapest vegetables. I’d meet him coming back from the market when I would be going out for breakfast.”

“I was the finest judge of *poireaux* in the sixth arrondissement,” Thomas Hudson told the boys.

“What’s *poireaux?”*

“Leeks.”

“It looks like long, green, quite big onions,” young Tom said. “Only it’s not bright shiny like onions. It’s dull shiny. The leaves are green and the ends are white. You boil it and eat it cold with olive oil and vinegar mixed with salt and pepper. You eat the whole thing, top and all. It’s delicious. I believe I’ve eaten as much of it as maybe anyone in the world.”

“What’s the sixth whatever it is?” Andrew asked.

“You certainly hold up conversation,” David told him. “If I don’t know French I have to ask.”

“Paris is divided into twenty arrondissements or city districts. We lived in the sixth.”

“Papa, can we skip the arrondissements and you tell us something else?” Andrew asked.

“You can’t stand to learn anything, you athlete,” David said. “I want to learn,” Andrew said. “But arrondissements is too old for me. You’re always telling me things are too old for me. I admit that is too old for me. I can’t follow it.”

“What’s Ty Cobb’s lifetime batting average?” David asked him.

“Three sixty-seven.”

“That’s not too old for you.”

“Cut it out, David. Some people like baseball and you like arrondissements.”

“I suppose we don’t have arrondissements in Rochester.”

“Oh cut it out. I just thought papa and Mr. Davis knew things

that would be more interesting to everybody than those damn—Oh hell, I can't even remember the name of them."

"You're not supposed to swear when we are around," Thomas Hudson corrected.

"I'm sorry, papa," the small boy said. "I can't help it that I'm so damn young. I'm sorry again. I mean so young."

He was upset and hurt. David could tease him pretty successfully.

"You'll get over being young," Thomas Hudson told him. "I know it's hard not to swear when your feelings get working. Only don't swear in front of grown people. I don't care what you say by yourselves."

"Please, papa. I said I was sorry."

"I know," Thomas Hudson said. "I wasn't bawling you out. I was just explaining. I see you guys so seldom it makes a lot of explaining."

"Not much really, papa," David said.

"No," Thomas Hudson said. "It isn't much."

"Andrew never swears in front of mother," David said. "Leave me out, David. It's over, isn't it, papa?"

"If you boys want to really know how to swear," young Tom said, "you ought to read Mr. Joyce."

"I can swear as much as I need," David said. "At least for now."

"My friend Mr. Joyce has words and expressions I'd never even heard of. I'll bet nobody could out-swear him in any language."

"Then after that he made up a whole new language," Roger said. He was lying on his back on the beach with his eyes closed.

"I can't understand that new language," young Tom said. "I guess I'm not old enough for it. But wait until you boys read *Ulysses."*

"That's not for boys," Thomas Hudson said. "It isn't really. You couldn't understand it and you shouldn't try to. Really. You have to wait till you're older."

“I read it all,” young Tom said. “I couldn’t understand practically any of it when I first read it, papa, just as you say. But I kept on reading it and now there’s part of it I really understand and I can explain it to people. It’s certainly made me proud that I was one of Mr. Joyce’s friends.”

“Was he really a friend of Mr. Joyce, papa?” Andrew asked.

“Mr. Joyce always used to ask about him.”

“You’re damn right I was a friend of Mr. Joyce,” young Tom said. “He was one of the best friends I ever had.”

“I don’t think you better explain the book much yet,” Thomas Hudson said. “Not quite yet. What part is it that you explain?”

“The last part. The part where the lady talks out loud to herself.”

“The soliloquy,” David said. “Have you read it?”

“Oh sure,” David said. “Tommy read it to me.”

“Did he explain it?”

“As well as he could. Some of it’s a little old for both of us.”

“Where did you get hold of it?”

“In the books at home. I borrowed it and took it to school.”

“You what?”

“I used to read passages of it out loud to the boys and tell them how Mr. Joyce was my friend and how much time we used to spend together.”

“How did the boys like it?”

“Some of the more devout boys thought it was a little strong.”

“Did they find out about it at school?”

“Sure. Didn’t you hear, papa? No, I guess that was when you were in Abyssinia. The headmaster was going to expel me but I explained Mr. Joyce was a great writer and a personal friend of mine so finally the headmaster said he’d keep the book and send it home and I promised I’d consult him before I read anything else to the boys or attempted to explain any classics. First, when he was going to expel me, he thought I had a dirty mind. But I haven’t got a dirty mind, papa. That is, not any dirtier than anybody else’s.”

"Did he send the book home?"

"Oh yes. He was going to confiscate it but I explained it was a first edition and that Mr. Joyce had written in it for you and that he couldn't confiscate it because it wasn't mine. I think he was very disappointed not to confiscate it."

"When can I read that book by Mr. Joyce, papa?" Andrew asked.

"Not for a long time."

"But Tommy read it."

"Tommy is a friend of Mr. Joyce."

"Boy, I'll say I am," said young Tom. "Papa, we never knew Balzac, did we?"

"No. He was before our time."

"Nor Gautier? I found two swell ones by them at home too. The *Droll Stories* and *Mademoiselle de Maupin.* I don't understand *Mademoiselle de Maupin* at all yet but I am reading it over to try to and it's great. But if they weren't friends of ours I think they would expel me sure if I read them to the boys."

"How are they, Tommy?" David asked.

"Wonderful. You'll like them both."

"Why don't you consult the headmaster as to whether you can read them to the boys?" Roger said. "They're better than what the boys will dig up for themselves."

"No, Mr. Davis. I don't think I'd better. He might get that dirty-mind idea again. Anyway, with the boys it wouldn't be the same as though they were friends of mine like Mr. Joyce. Anyway I don't understand *Mademoiselle de Maupin* well enough to explain it and I wouldn't have the same authority explaining it as when I had Mr. Joyce's friendship to back me up."

"I'd like to have heard that explanation," Roger said.

"Shucks, Mr. Davis. It was very rudimentary. It wouldn't have interested you. You understand that part perfectly well, don't you?"

"Pretty well."

"I wish we would have known Balzac and Gautier, though, as

friends the way we knew Mr. Joyce."

"So do I," said Thomas Hudson.

"We knew some good writers, though, didn't we?"

"We certainly did," Thomas Hudson said. It was pleasant and hot on the sand and he felt lazy after working and happy, too. It made him very happy to hear the boys talk.

"Let's go in and swim and then have lunch," Roger said. "It's getting hot."

Thomas Hudson watched them. Swimming slowly, the four of them swam out in the green water, their bodies making shadows over the clear white sand, bodies forging along, shadows projected on the sand by the slight angle of the sun, the brown arms lifting and pushing forward, the hands slicing in, taking hold of the water and pulling it back, legs beating along steadily, heads turning for air, breathing easily and smoothly. Thomas Hudson stood there and watched them swimming out with the wind and he was very fond of the four of them. He thought he ought to paint them swimming, although it would be very difficult. He would try it, though, during the summer.

He was too lazy to swim although he knew he should and finally he walked out feeling the breeze-cooled water fresh and cool on his sun-warmed legs, feeling it cool around his crotch and then, slipping forward into the ocean river, he swam out to meet them as they came in. With his head on the same level theirs were on, it was a different picture now, changed too because they were swimming against the breeze coming in and the chop was bothering both Andrew and David, who were swimming raggedly. The illusion of them being four sea animals was gone. They had gone out so smoothly and handsomely but now the two younger boys were having difficulty against the wind and the sea. It was not real difficulty. It was just enough to take away any illusion of being at home in the water as they had looked going out. They made two different pictures and perhaps the second was the better one. The

five swimmers came out on the beach and walked up to the house.

"That's why I like it better underwater," David said. "You don't have to worry about breathing."

"Why don't you goggle-fish with papa and Tommy this aft," Andrew said to him. "I'll stay ashore with Mr. Davis."

"Don't you want to go, Mr. Davis?"

"I might stay ashore."

"Don't stay in on account of me," Andrew said. "I've got plenty to do. I just thought maybe you were staying in."

"I think I'll stay in," Roger said. "I may lie around and read."

"Don't let him maneuver you, Mr. Davis. Don't let him charm you."

"I feel like staying in," Roger said.

They were up on the porch now and everyone had changed to dry shorts. Joseph had brought out a bowl of conch salad. All the boys were eating it, and young Tom was drinking a bottle of beer. Thomas Hudson was sitting back in a chair and Roger was standing with the shaker.

"I get sleepy after lunch," he said.

"Well, we'll miss you," young Tom said. "I'd just as soon stay in, too."

"Come on, you stay in, too, Tom," Andrew said. "Let Papa and David go."

"I won't catch you," young Tom told him.

"I don't want you to catch me. There's a Negro boy that will catch me."

"What do you want to be a pitcher for, anyway?" Tommy said. "You'll never be big enough."

"I'll be as big as Dick Rudolph and Dick Kerr."

"Whoever they were," young Tom said.

"What's some jockey's name?" David whispered to Roger.

"Earl Sande."

"You'll be as big as Earl Sande," David told him.

“Oh, go and goggle-fish,” Andrew said. “I’m going to be a friend of Mr. Davis like Tom was of Mr. Joyce. Can I, Mr. Davis? Then at school I can say, ‘When Mr. Davis and I spent that summer together on that tropical island writing all those vicious stories while my own father was painting those pictures you’ve all seen of ladies in the nude.’ You paint them in the nude, don’t you, papa?”

“Sometimes. They’re quite dark though.”

“Oh boy,” Andrew said. “I don’t care about the color. Tom can have Mr. Joyce.”

“You’d be too shy to look at them,” David said.

“Maybe I would. But I’d learn.”

“A nude by papa would be nothing like that chapter by Mr. Joyce,” young Tom said. “It’s only because you’re a little boy that there seems to be anything extraordinary about a nude at all.”

“OK. Just the same I’ll take Mr. Davis, with illustrations by papa. Somebody said at school Mr. Davis’s stories were truly vicious.”

“All right. I’ll take Mr. Davis, too. I’m an old, old friend of Mr. Davis.”

“And of Mr. Picasso and Mr. Braque and Mr. Miro and Mr. Masson and Mr. Pascin,” Thomas Hudson said. “You knew them all.”

“And of Mr. Waldo Peirce,” young Tom said. “You see, Andy boy, you can’t win. You started too late. You can’t win. While you were up in Rochester and for years before you were born papa and I were out in the great world. I probably knew most of the greatest painters alive. Many of them were my very good friends.”

“I have to start sometime,” Andrew said. “And I take Mr. Davis. You don’t have to write vicious stories either, Mr. Davis. I’ll make all that up the way Tommy does. You just tell me anything awful you ever did and I’ll say I was here when it happened.”

“The hell I do make things up that way,” young Tom said. “Sometimes papa and Mr. Davis refresh my memory for me. But I figured in and took part in a whole epoch in painting and in

literature and if I had to I could write my memoirs right now as far as that goes."

"You're getting crazy, Tommy," Andrew said. "You better watch yourself."

"Don't tell him a thing, Mr. Davis," young Tom said. "Make him start from scratch like we did."

"You leave it to me and Mr. Davis," Andrew said. "You stay out of this."

"Tell me about some more of those friends of mine, papa," young Tom said. "I know I knew them and I know we used to be around the cafés together but I'd like to know some more definite things about them. The sort of things I know about Mr. Joyce, say."

"Can you remember Mr. Pascin?"

"No. Not really. What was he like?"

"You can't claim him as a friend if you don't even remember him," Andrew said. "Do you think I won't be able to remember what Mr. Davis was like a few years from now?"

"Shut up," young Tom said. "Tell me about him please, papa."

"Mr. Pascin used to make some drawings that could illustrate the parts you like of Mr. Joyce very well."

"Really? Gee, that would be something."

"You used to sit with him at the café and he used to draw pictures of you sometimes on napkins. He was small and very tough and very strange. He used to wear a derby hat most of the time and he was a beautiful painter. He always acted as though he knew a great secret, as though he had just heard it and it amused him. It made him very happy sometimes and sometimes it made him sad. But you could always tell he knew it and it amused him very much."

"What was the secret?"

"Oh drunkenness and drugs and the secret Mr. Joyce knew all about in that last chapter and how to paint beautifully. He could paint more beautifully than anybody then and that was his secret,

too, and he didn't care. He thought he didn't care about anything but he did really."

"Was he bad?"

"Oh yes. He was really bad and that was part of his secret. He liked being bad and he didn't have remorse."

"Were he and I good friends?"

"Very. He used to call you The Monster."

"Gee," said young Tom, happily. "The Monster."

"Have we got any pictures of Mr. Pascin's, papa?" David asked.

"A couple."

"Did he ever paint Tommy?"

"No. He used to draw Tommy, mostly on napkins and on the marble top of café tables. He called him the horrible, beer-swilling monster of the Left Bank."

"Get that title down, Tom," David said.

"Did Mr. Pascin have a dirty mind?" young Tom asked.

"I believe so."

"Don't you know?"

"I believe you could say he had. I think that was part of his secret."

"But Mr. Joyce didn't."

"No."

"And you haven't."

"No," Thomas Hudson said. "I don't think so."

"Do you have a dirty mind, Mr. Davis?" Tommy asked.

"I don't think so."

"That's good," young Tom said. "I told the headmaster neither papa nor Mr. Joyce had dirty minds and now I can tell him about Mr. Davis if he asks me. He was pretty set on it that I had a dirty mind. But I wasn't worried. There's a boy at school that really has one and you can tell the difference all right. What was Mr. Pascin's first name?"

"Jules."

“How do you spell it?” David asked. Thomas Hudson told him.

“What ever became of Mr. Pascin?” young Tom asked.

“He hanged himself,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Oh gee,” Andrew said.

“Poor Mr. Pascin,” young Tom said in benediction. “I’ll pray for him tonight.”

“I’m going to pray for Mr. Davis,” Andrew said.

“And do it often,” Roger said.

VI

That night after the boys had gone to bed Thomas Hudson and Roger Davis sat up in the big room talking. It had been too rough to do much goggle-fishing and after supper the boys had gone off with Joseph to go snapper fishing. They had come back tired and happy and said good night and gone to bed. The men had heard them talking for a while and then they were asleep.

Andrew was afraid of the dark and the other boys knew it but they never teased him about it.

"Why do you think he's afraid of the dark?" Roger asked. "I don't know," Thomas Hudson said. "Weren't you?"

"I don't think so."

"I was," Thomas Hudson said. "Is it supposed to mean anything?"

"I don't know," Roger said. "I was afraid of dying and that something would happen to my brother."

"I didn't know you had a brother. Where is he?"

"Dead," Roger said.

"I'm sorry."

"You don't need to be. It was when we were kids."

"Was he older than you?"

"A year younger."

"What was it?"

"A canoe turned over with us."

"How old were you?"

"About twelve."

"Don't talk about it if you don't want to."

“I’m not sure it did me a lot of good,” Roger said. “Didn’t you know about it really?”

“Never.”

“For a long time I thought everybody in the world knew about it. It’s strange when you are a boy. The water was too cold and he let go. But what it added up to was that I came back and he didn’t.”

“Poor bloody Roger.”

“No,” said Roger. “But it was early to learn about that stuff. And then I loved him very much and I’d always been afraid something would happen to him. The water was cold for me too. But I couldn’t say that.”

“Where was it?”

“Up in Maine. I don’t think my father ever forgave me although he tried to understand it. I’ve wished it was me every day since. But that’s hardly a career.”

“What was your brother’s name?”

“Dave.”

“Hell. Was that why you wouldn’t go goggle-fishing today?”

“I guess so. But I’m going every other day. You never work those things out, though.”

“You’re grown up enough not to talk that way.”

“I tried to go down after him. But I couldn’t find him,” Roger said. “It was too deep and it was really cold.”

“David Davis,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Yes. In our family the first one is called Roger and the second one David.”

“Roge, you did get over it, though.”

“No,” Roger said. “You never get over it and sooner or later I have to tell it. I’m ashamed of that the way I’m ashamed of the fight on the dock.”

“You had nothing to be ashamed of there.”

“Yes, I did. I told you once. Let’s not go into that.”

“All right.”

“I’m not going to have any more fights. Ever. You never fight and you can fight as well as I can.”

“I can’t fight as well as you. But I just made up my mind I wouldn’t fight.”

“I’m not going to fight and I’m going to be some good and quit writing junk.”

“That’s the best thing I’ve heard you say,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Do you think I could write something that would be worth a damn?”

“You could try. What did you quit painting for?”

“Because I couldn’t kid myself any longer. I can’t kid myself any longer on the writing either.”

“What are you going to do, practically?”

“Go someplace and write a good straight novel as well as I can write it.”

“Why don’t you stay here and write? You can stay on here after the boys are gone. It’s too hot to write in your place.”

“I wouldn’t bother you too much?”

“No, Roge. I get lonely, too, you know. You can’t just run away from everything all the time. This sounds like a speech. I’ll cut it out.”

“No. Go on. I need it.”

“If you are going to start to work, start here.”

“You don’t think out West would be better?”

“Any place is good. The thing is not to run from it.”

“No. Any place isn’t good,” Roger objected. “I know that. They’re good and then they go bad.”

“Sure. But this is a good place now. Maybe it won’t always be. But it’s fine now. You’d have company when you quit work and so would I. We wouldn’t interfere with each other and you could really bite on the nail.”

“Do you truly think I could write a novel that would be any good?”

“You never will if you don’t try. You told me a hell of a good novel tonight if you wanted to write it. Just start with the canoe—”

“And end it how?”

“Make it up after the canoe.”

“Hell,” Roger said. “I’m so corrupted that if I put in a canoe it would have a beautiful Indian girl in it that young Jones, who is on his way to warn the settlers that Cecil B. de Mille is coming, would drop into, hanging by one hand to a tangle of vines that covers the river while he holds his trusty flintlock, ‘Old Betsy,’ in the other hand, and the beautiful Indian girl says, ‘Jones, it ees you. Now we can make love as our frail craft moves toward the falls that someday weel be Niagara,’”

“No,” said Thomas Hudson. “You could just make the canoe and the cold lake and your kid brother—”

“David Davis. Eleven.”

“And afterwards. And then make up from there to the end,”

“I don’t like the end,” Roger said.

“I don’t think any of us do, really,” Thomas Hudson said. “But there’s always an end.”

“Maybe we better knock off talking,” Roger said. “I’m liable to start thinking about the novel. Tommy, why is it fun to paint well and hell to write well? I never painted well. But it was fun even the way I painted.”

“I don’t know,” Thomas Hudson said. “Maybe in painting the tradition and the line are clearer and there are more people helping you. Even when you break from the straight line of great painting, it is always there to help you.”

“I think another thing is that better people do it,” Roger said. “If I were a good enough guy maybe I could have been a good painter. Maybe I’m just enough of a son of a bitch to be a good writer.”

“That’s the worst oversimplification I’ve ever heard.”

“I always oversimplify,” Roger maintained. “That’s one reason I’m no damn good.”

“Let’s go to bed.”

“I’ll stay up and read a while,” Roger said.

They slept well and Thomas Hudson did not wake when Roger came out to the sleeping porch late in the night. After breakfast the wind was light and there were no clouds in the sky and they organized for a day of underwater fishing.

“You’re coming, aren’t you, Mr. Davis?” Andrew asked.

“I most certainly am.”

“That’s good,” said Andrew. “I’m glad.”

“How do you feel, Andy?” Thomas Hudson asked.

“Scared,” said Andrew. “Like always. But I’m not so scared with Mr. Davis going.”

“Never be scared, Andy,” Roger said. “It’s worthless. Your father told me.”

“They tell you,” Andrew said. “They always tell you. But David’s the only young boy I ever knew with any brains that isn’t scared.”

“Shut up,” David said. “You’re just a creature of your imagination.”

“Mr. Davis and I are always scared,” Andrew said. “It’s possibly our superior intelligence.”

“You’re going to be careful, Davy, aren’t you?” Thomas Hudson said.

“Naturally.”

Andrew looked at Roger and shrugged his shoulders.

VII

Down along the reef where they went for underwater fishing on that day, there was the old iron wreck of a steamer that had broken up and at high tide the rusty iron of her boilers still showed above the sea. Today the wind was in the south and Thomas Hudson anchored in the lee of a patch of reef, not too close in, and Roger and the boys got their masks and spears ready. The spears were very primitive, and of all sorts, and these spears were made according to Thomas Hudson's and the boys' individual ideas.

Joseph had come along to scull the dinghy. He took Andrew in with him and they started for the reef while the others slipped over the side to swim.

"Aren't you coming, papa?" David called up to his father on the flying bridge of his fishing boat. The circle of glass over his eyes, nose, and forehead, with the rubber frame pressed under his nose, into his cheeks, and tight against his forehead, held tight into the flesh by a rubber strap around the back of his head, made him look like one of the characters in those pseudoscientific comic strips.

"I'll come over later on."

"Don't wait too long until everything gets spooked."

"There's plenty of reef. You won't work it all over."

"But I know two holes out beyond the boilers that are wonderful. I found them the day we came alone. They were so untouched and full of fish I left them for when we would all be here."

"I remember. I'll come over in about an hour."

"I'll save them for when you come," David said and started to

swim after the others, his right hand holding the six-foot ironwood shaft with the hand-forged, twin-pronged fish grains fitted to the end and made fast with a length of heavy fishing line. His face was down in the water and he was studying the bottom through the glass of his mask as he swam. He was an undersea boy and now that he was so brown and that he was swimming with only the wet back of his head showing he reminded Thomas Hudson more than ever of an otter.

He watched him swim along, using his left arm and kicking with his long legs and feet in a slow steady drive and occasionally, and each time much, much longer than you thought it would be, lifting his face a little to one side to breathe. Roger and his oldest boy had swum out with their masks up on their foreheads and were a long way ahead. Andrew and Joseph were over the reef in the dinghy but Andrew had not gone overboard yet. There was only a light wind and the water over the reef looked light and creaming, with the reef showing brown and the dark blue water beyond.

Thomas Hudson went below to the galley where Eddy was peeling potatoes over a bucket held between his knees. He was looking out the porthole of the galley toward the reef.

"Boys oughtn't to scatter," he said. "Ought to keep close to the dinghy."

"Do you think anything would come in over the reef?"

"Tide's pretty well up. These are spring tides."

"Water's awfully clear," Thomas Hudson said.

"Bad things in the ocean," Eddy said. "This is a tough ocean around here if they get to smell that fish."

"They haven't got any fish yet."

"They'll get them soon. They want to get those fish right into that dinghy before any fish smell or any blood smell trails on that tide."

"I'll swim out."

"No. You holler at them to stay close together and keep the fish

in the dinghy."

Thomas Hudson went up on deck and shouted what Eddy had said to Roger. He held up his spear and waved that he had understood.

Eddy came up into the cockpit with the pot full of potatoes in one hand and his knife in the other.

"You take that good rifle, the little good one, and get up on the topside, Mr. Tom," he said. "I just don't like it. I don't like boys out there on this tide. We're too close to the real ocean."

"Let's get them in."

"No. Chances are I just get nervous. Bad night last night anyway. I'm fond of them like they're my boys and I worry the hell about them." He put the pot of potatoes down. "Tell you what let's do. Start her up and I'll get the anchor up and we'll run in closer to the reef and anchor. She'll swing clear with this tide and the wind. Let's put her right in."

Thomas Hudson started the big motor and went up to the flying bridge and the topside controls. Ahead, as Eddy got the anchor up, he could see them all in the water now and, as he watched, David came up from underwater with a fish flopping on his spear that he held high in the air and Thomas Hudson heard him shout for the dinghy.

"Put her nose right against the reef," Eddy called from the bow where he was holding the anchor.

Thomas Hudson came up slowly to almost touch the reef, seeing the big brown coral heads, the black sea urchins on the sand, and the purple sea fans swaying toward him with the tide. Eddy heaved the anchor and Thomas Hudson came astern on the engine. The boat swung off and the reef slid away. Eddy paid out line until the rope came taut and Thomas Hudson cut the motor and they swung there.

"Now we can keep an eye on them," Eddy said, standing in the bow. "I can't stand worrying about those kids. Ruins my damn

digestion. Bad enough the way it is now."

"I'll stay up here and watch them."

"I'll pass you up the rifle and get the hell back to those potatoes. The boys like potato salad, don't they? The way we fix it?"

"Sure. Roger too. Put in plenty of hard-boiled egg and onion."

"I'll keep the potatoes good and firm. Here's the rifle."

As Thomas Hudson reached for the rifle it was chunky and heavy in its clipped sheep-wool-lined case that he kept saturated with Fiend-oil to keep the sea air from rusting it. He pulled it out by the butt and slid the case under the decking on the flying bridge. It was a .256 Mannlicher Shoenauer with the old eighteen-inch barrel they weren't allowed to sell any more. The stock and forearm were browned like a walnut nut-meat with oil and rubbing, and the barrel, rubbed from months of carrying in a saddle bucket, was oil-slick, without a spot of rust. The cheek piece of the stock was worn smooth from his own cheek and when he pulled back the bolt the revolving magazine was full of heavy bellied cartridges with the long, thin, pencil-shaped metal-cased bullet with only a tiny exposed lead tip.

It was really too good a gun to keep on a boat but Thomas Hudson was so fond of it and it reminded him of so many things, so many people, and so many places that he liked to have it with him and he had found that, in the sheepskin case, once the clipped wool was well impregnated with the Fiend-oil, the rifle was not harmed at all by the salt air. A gun is to shoot anyway, he thought, not to be preserved in a case, and this was a really good rifle, easy to shoot, easy to teach anyone to shoot with, and handy on the boat. He had always had more confidence shooting it, as to being able to place his shots at close and moderate range, than any other rifle he had ever owned and it made him happy to pull it out of the case now and pull back the bolt and shove a shell into the breech.

The boat lay almost steady in the tide and the breeze, and he slipped the sling of the rifle over one of the levers of the topside

controls so that the rifle hung there handy, and lay down on the sunning mattress on the flying bridge. Lying on his belly to brown his back, he looked out to where Roger and the boys were spearfishing. They were all diving, staying down varying lengths of time and coming up for air to disappear again, occasionally coming up with fish on the spears. Joseph was sculling from one to another to take the fish off the spear points and drop them into the dinghy. He could hear Joseph shouting and laughing and see the bright color of the fish, red or red with brown speckles or red and yellow or striped yellow, as Joseph shook them off the spears or pulled them loose and tossed them back into the shade under the stern of the dinghy.

"Let me have a drink, Eddy, will you please?" Thomas Hudson called down over the side.

"What's it to be?" Eddy stuck his head out of the forward cockpit. He was wearing his old felt hat and a white shirt and in the bright sun his eyes were bloodshot and Thomas Hudson noticed he had Mercurochrome on his lips.

"What did you do to your mouth?" he asked him.

"Some sort of trouble last night. I just put that on. Does it show bad?"

"It makes you look like some back island whore."

"Oh hell," said Eddy. "I put it on without looking at it in the dark. Just by the feel. Do you want a drink with coconut water? I got some water coconuts."

"Very good."

"Want a Green Isaac's Special?"

"Fine. Make it a Special."

Where Thomas Hudson lay on the mattress his head was in the shade cast by the platform at the forward end of the flying bridge where the controls were and when Eddy came aft with the tall cold drink made of gin, lime juice, green coconut water, and chipped ice with just enough Angostura bitters to give it a rusty, rose color, he

held the drink in the shadow so the ice would not melt while he looked out over the sea.

"Boys seem to be doing all right," Eddy said. "We've got fish for dinner already."

"What else will we have?"

"Mashed potatoes with the fish. Got some tomato salad, too. That potato salad to start with."

"Sounds fine. How's that potato salad?"

"It isn't cold yet, Tom."

"Eddy, you like to cook, don't you?"

"Damn right I like to cook. I like going in a boat and I like to cook. What I don't like is rows and fights and trouble."

"You used to be pretty good at trouble, though."

"I always avoided it, Tom. Sometimes you can't avoid it but I always tried to."

"What was it last night?"

"Nothing."

He didn't want to talk about it. He never talked about the old days either when there had been plenty of trouble.

"All right. What else is there to eat? We have to feed them up. They're growing boys."

"I made a cake at the house and brought her and there's a couple of fresh pineapples cold in the ice. I'll slice them up."

"Good. How will we have the fish?"

"Any way you want it. Let's see what the best is of what they get, then cook it how they and you and Roger want it. David just got a good yellowtail. He had another one but he lost it. This one's a big flaggy. He's getting far out, though. He's still got the fish and Joe's the hell over toward Andy with the dinghy."

Thomas Hudson put the drink down in the shade and stood up.

"Jesus Christ," Eddy said. "There it comes!"

Out across the blue water, showing like a brown dinghy sail and slicing through the water with heavy, tail-propelled, lunging

thrusts, the high triangular fin was coming in toward the hole at the edge of the reef where the boy with the mask on his face held his fish up out of the water.

"Oh Jesus," Eddy said. "What a son of a bitching hammerhead. Jesus, Tom. Oh Jesus."

Thomas Hudson remembered, afterwards, the main impression he had was the great height of the fin, the way it turned and swung like a hound on a scent, and the way it knifed forward and still seemed to wobble.

He had the .256 up and shot just ahead of the fin. The shot was over and threw a spurt of water and he remembered the barrel was sticky with oil. The fin went right on weaving in.

"Throw him the goddamn fish," Eddy yelled to David and jumped off the back of the house down into the cockpit.

Thomas Hudson shot again and was behind with another spurt of water. He felt sick at his stomach, as though something had hold of him inside and was gripping him there, and he shot again; as carefully and steady as he could; knowing fully what the shot meant; and the spurt of water was ahead of the fin. The fin kept right on with the same awful motion. He had one shot now, no extra shells, and the shark was about thirty yards from the boy, coming in with the same slicing motion. David had the fish off the spear and in his hand, the mask was up on his forehead, and he was looking steadily toward the shark coming.

Thomas Hudson was trying to be loose but steady, trying to hold his breath and not to think of anything but the shot; to squeeze and keep just a touch ahead and at the base of the fin which was wobbling more now than it had at the start when he heard the submachine gun start firing from the stern and saw water start to spout all around the fin. Then it clattered again in a short burst and the water jumped in a tighter patch right at the base of the fin. As he shot, the clatter came again, short and tight, and the fin went under and there was a boil in the water and then the biggest

hammerhead he had ever seen rose white-bellied out of the sea and began to plane off over the water crazily, on his back, throwing water like an aquaplane. His belly was shining an obscene white, his yard-wide mouth like a turned-up grin, the great horns of his head with the eyes on the end, spread wide out as he bounced and slid over the water, Eddy's gun rapping and ripping into the white of his belly making black spots that were red before he turned and went down and Thomas Hudson could see him rolling over and over as he sank.

"Get those goddamnned kids in here," he heard Eddy shouting. "I can't stand this sort of thing."

Roger had swum fast toward David, and Joseph was pulling Andy into the dinghy and then sculling out toward the other two.

"Goddam," Eddy said. "Did you ever see such a hammerhead? Thank God they show on the surface when they hook up. Thank God for that. The bastards always get on top. Did you *see* him go?"

"Give me a box of shells," Thomas Hudson said. He was shaky and hollow sick feeling inside. "Come on in here," he shouted. They were swimming alongside of the dinghy and Roger was pushing David up over the gunwale.

"They might as well fish," Eddy said. "Any shark in the ocean will go for *him* now. He'll call the whole ocean up. Did you see him go on his back, Tom, and then that damned roll? Jesus, what a hammerhead. Did you see the kid with the fish ready to throw him? That's my Davy boy. Oh what an old Davy boy."

"They better come in."

"Sure they better. I was just talking. They'll come in. Don't worry they won't come in."

"God, it was a terrible thing. Where did you have that gun?"

"Commissioner made some trouble about me having it ashore so I've been keeping it in the locker under my bunk."

"You certainly can shoot it."

"Hell, who couldn't shoot it with that shark going toward that

old Davy boy waiting there quiet with that fish to throw? Looking straight at where the shark was coming. Hell, I don't care if I never see anything else in my goddamn life."

They came up over the side out of the dinghy. The kids were wet and very excited and Roger was very shaken. He went over and shook hands with Eddy and Eddy said, "We never should have let them get out like that on this tide."

Roger shook his head and put his arm around Eddy.

"My fault," Eddy said. "I was born here. You're a stranger. It wasn't your fault. I'm the one that's responsible."

"You lived up to your responsibilities all right," Roger said.

"Hell," Eddy said. "Nobody could miss him at that range."

"Could you see him, Dave?" Andrew asked very politely.

"Only his fin till just at the end. Then I could see him before Eddy hit him and he went down and then came out on his back."

Eddy was rubbing him with a towel and Thomas Hudson could see the goose pimples still over his legs and back and shoulders.

"I never saw anything like when he came out of water and started to go on his back," young Tom said. "I never saw anything in the world like that."

"You won't see a lot of things like that," his father told him.

"He must have weighed eleven hundred pounds," Eddy said.

"I don't think they make a bigger hammerhead. Jesus, Roger, did you see that fin on him?"

"I saw it," Roger said.

"Do you think we can get him?" David asked.

"Hell no," Eddy said. "He went down rolling over and over to hell knows where. He's down in eighty fathoms and the whole ocean will eat on him. He's calling them up now."

"I wish we could have got him," David said.

"Take it easy, Davy boy. You got the goose flesh on you still."

"Were you very scared, Dave?" Andrew asked.

"Yes," David told him.

“What were you going to do?” Tom asked, very respectfully.

“I was going to throw the fish to him,” David said and as Thomas Hudson watched him the little sharp wave of pimples spread over his shoulders. “Then I was going to hit him in the middle of his face with the grains.”

“Oh hell,” Eddy said and he turned away with the towel. “What do you want to drink, Roger?”

“Have you got any hemlock?” Roger asked him.

“Cut it out, Roger,” Thomas Hudson said. “We were all responsible.”

“Irresponsible.”

“It’s over.”

“All right.”

“I’ll make some gin drinks,” Eddy said. “Tom had a gill drink when it happened.”

“It’s still up there.”

“It won’t be any damn good now,” Eddy said. “I’ll make you a fresh one.”

“You’re pretty good, Davy,” young Tom told him very proudly. “Wait till I tell the boys about this at school.”

“They wouldn’t believe it,” David said. “Don’t tell them if I’m going there.”

“Why?” young Tom asked.

“I don’t know,” David said. Then he started to cry like a little boy. “Oh shit, I couldn’t stand it if they didn’t believe it.”

Thomas Hudson picked him up and held him in his arms with his head against his chest and the other kids turned away and Roger looked away and then Eddy came out with three drinks with his thumb in one of them. Thomas Hudson could tell he’d had another one below.

“What’s the matter with you, Davy?” he asked.

“Nothing.”

“Good,” Eddy said. “That’s the way I like to hear you talk, you

damn old son of a bitch. Get down and quit blubbering and let your old man drink."

David stood there standing very straight.

"Is it OK to fish that part in low tide?" he asked Eddy. "Nothing will bother you," Eddy said. "There's morays. But nothing big will come in. They can't make it at low tide."

"Can we go at low tide, papa?"

"If Eddy says so. Eddy's the boss man."

"Hell, Tom," Eddy said, and he was very happy, his Mercurochromed lips were happy and his bloodshot eyes as happy as eyes could be. "Anybody couldn't hit that damned no-good hammerhead with one of those things ought to throw the damn thing away before he'd get in trouble with it."

"You hit him plenty," Thomas Hudson said. "You hit him wonderfully. I wish I could tell you how you hit him."

"You don't have to tell me," Eddy said. "I'll see that old evil son of a bitch going on his back the rest of my life. Did you ever see anything look more evil?"

They sat there waiting for the lunch and Thomas Hudson was looking out to sea where Joseph had sculled out to where the shark had gone down. Joseph was looking over the side of the dinghy into a water glass.

"Can you see anything?" Thomas Hudson called to him.

"Too deep, Mr. Tom. He went right down over the shelf. He's laying on the bottom now."

"I wish we could have gotten his jaws," young Tom said. "Wouldn't you like to have them all bleached and hanging up, papa?"

"I think they would give me bad dreams," Andrew said. "I'm just as glad we haven't got them."

"They'd be a wonderful trophy," young Tom said. "That would be something to take to school."

"They'd belong to Dave if we had them," Andrew said.

“No. They’d belong to Eddy,” young Tom said. “I believe he’d give them to me if I asked him for them.”

“He’d give them to Dave,” Andrew said.

“I don’t think maybe you should go out again so soon, Dave,” Thomas Hudson said.

“It won’t be till plenty of time after lunch,” David said. “We have to wait for the low tide.”

“I mean goggle-fish so soon.”

“Eddy said it was all right.”

“I know. But I’m still pretty spooked.”

“But Eddy knows.”

“You wouldn’t like to just not go as a present to me?”

“Certainly, papa, if you want. But I love it underwater. I guess I love it more than anything. And if Eddy says—”

“OK,” said Thomas Hudson. “People aren’t supposed to ask for presents anyway.”

“Papa, I didn’t mean it like that. I won’t go if you don’t want me to. Only Eddy said—”

“What about a moray? Eddy mentioned morays.”

“Papa, there’s *always* morays. *You* taught me not to be afraid of morays and how to handle them and how to watch out for them and the kind of holes they live in.”

“I know. And I let you go out there where that shark came.”

“Papa, we were all out there. Don’t make yourself some sort of special guilt about it. I just went too far out and I lost that good yellowtail after I’d speared him and he bloodied the water and that called the shark.”

“Didn’t he come just like a hound though?” Thomas Hudson said. He was trying to get rid of the emotion. “I’ve seen them come at really great speed like that before. There was one that used to live off Signal Rock that used to come that way on the smell of a bait. I’m very ashamed I couldn’t hit him.”

“You were shooting awfully close to him, papa,” young Tom

said.

"I was doing everything but hit him."

"He wasn't coming for me, papa," David said. "He was coming for the fish."

"He'd have taken you, though," Eddy said. He was setting the table. "Don't ever fool yourself he wouldn't with that fish smell on you and the blood in the water. He'd have hit a horse. He'd have hit anything. Good God, don't talk about it. I'll have to have another drink."

"Eddy," David said. "Will it really be safe on the low tide?"

"Sure. Didn't I tell you so before?"

"You aren't making some sort of a point, are you?" Thomas Hudson asked David. He had stopped looking out across the water and he was all right again. He knew that what David was doing was what he should do no matter why he was doing it and he knew he had been selfish about it.

"Papa, all I mean is that I love it better than anything else and it's such a wonderful day for it and we never know when it might blow—"

"And Eddy says," Thomas Hudson interrupted.

"And Eddy says," David grinned at him.

"Eddy says the hell with all of you. Come on and eat it up now before I throw it the hell overboard." He stood there with the bowl of salad, the platter of browned fish, and the mashed potatoes. "Where's that Joe?"

"He went out to look for the shark." "He's crazy."

When Eddy went below and young Tom was passing the food, Andrew whispered to his father, "Papa, is Eddy a rummy?"

Thomas Hudson was serving the cold, marinated potato salad covered with rough-ground black pepper. He had shown Eddy how to make it the way they used to make it at the Brasserie Lipp in Paris and it was one of the best things Eddy made on the boat.

"Did you see him shoot the shark?"

"I certainly did."

"That isn't the way rummies shoot."

He put some salad on Andrew's plate and took some for himself.

"The only reason I asked is because from where I'm sitting I can see in the galley and I've watched him take about eight drinks out of a bottle since we've been sitting here."

"That's his bottle," Thomas Hudson explained and helped Andrew to some more salad. Andrew was the fastest eater he had ever seen. He said he had learned it at school. "Try and eat a little slower, Andy. Eddy always brings his own bottle on board. Nearly all good cooks drink a little. Some drink quite a lot."

"I know he had eight. Wait. He's taking nine now."

"Damn you, Andrew," David said.

"Cut it out," Thomas Hudson said to both of them.

Young Tom broke in. "Here's a fine wonderful man saves your brother's life and he just takes a drink, or a few drinks, and you call him a rummy. You aren't fit to associate with human beings."

"I didn't call him one. I just asked papa, to know if he is one. I'm not against rummies. I just like to know if a man is or not."

"I'm going to buy Eddy a bottle of whatever it is he drinks with the very first money I get and I'm going to drink it with him," young Tom said grandly.

"What's that?" Eddy's head showed in the companionway with the old felt hat pushed onto the back of it showing the white above the sunburnt part of his face and a cigar sticking out of the corner of his Mercurochromed mouth. "Let me catch you drink anything but beer I beat the hell out of you. All three of you. Don't you talk about drinking. Do you want more mashed potatoes?"

"Please, Eddy," young Tom said and Eddy went below. "That makes ten," Andrew said, looking down through the companionway.

"Oh shut up, horseman," young Tom said to him. "Can't you respect a great man?"

“Eat some more fish, David,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Which is that big yellowtail?”

“I don’t believe he’s cooked yet.”

“I’ll take a yellow grunt then.”

“They’re awfully sweet.”

“I think spearing makes them even better if you eat them right away because it bleeds them.”

“Papa, can I ask Eddy to have a drink with us?” young Tom asked.

“Sure,” Thomas Hudson said.

“He had one. Don’t you remember?” Andrew interrupted.

“When we first came in he had one. You remember.”

“Papa, can I ask him to have another one with us now and to eat with us?”

“Of course,” Thomas Hudson said.

Young Tom went down below and Thomas Hudson heard him say, “Eddy, papa says would you please make a drink for yourself and come up and have it with us and eat with us.”

“Hell, Tommy,” Eddy said. “I never eat at noon. I just eat breakfast and at night.”

“What about having a drink with us?”

“I had a couple, Tommy.”

“Will you take one with me now and let me drink a bottle of beer with you?”

“Hell yes,” said Eddy. Thomas Hudson heard the icebox open and close. “Here’s to you, Tommy.”

Thomas Hudson heard the two bottles clink. He looked at Roger but Roger was looking out at the ocean.

“Here’s to you, Eddy,” he heard young Tom say. “It’s a great honor to drink with you.”

“Hell, Tommy,” Eddy told him. “It’s an honor to drink with you. I feel wonderful, Tommy. You see me shoot that old shark?”

“I certainly did, Eddy. Don’t you want to eat just a little

something with us?"

"No, Tommy. True."

"Would you like me to stay down here with you so you wouldn't have to drink alone?"

"Hell no, Tommy. You aren't getting mixed up on anything, are you? I don't have to drink. I don't have to do anything except cook a little and earn my goddamn living. I just feel good, Tommy. Did you see me shoot him? True?"

"Eddy, it was the greatest thing I ever saw. I just asked you if you wanted somebody so as not to be lonesome."

"I never been lonesome in my life," Eddy told him. "I'm happy and I got here what makes me happier."

"Eddy, I'd like to stay with you, anyway."

"No, Tommy. Take this other platter of fish up and go up there where you belong."

"I'd like to come back and stay."

"I ain't sick, Tommy. If I was ever sick I'd be happy to have you sit up with me. I'm just feeling about the goddamn best I ever felt ever."

"Eddy, are you sure you've got enough of that bottle?"

"Hell yes. If I ever run out I'll borrow some of Roger's and your old man's."

"Well, then, I'll take the fish up," young Tom said. "I'm awfully glad you feel so good, Eddy. I think it's wonderful."

Young Tom brought the platter of yellowtail, yellow and white grunts, and rock hind up into the cockpit. They were scored deep in triangular cuts across their flanks so the white meat showed, and fried crisp and brown, and he started to pass them around the table.

"Eddy said to thank you very much but he'd had a drink," he said. "And he doesn't eat lunch. Is this fish all right?"

"It's excellent," Thomas Hudson told him.

"Please eat," he said to Roger.

"All right," Roger said. "I'll try."

“Haven’t you eaten anything, Mr. Davis?” Andrew asked.
“No, Andy. But I’m going to eat now.”

VIII

In the night Thomas Hudson would wake and hear the boys asleep and breathing quietly and in the moonlight he could see them all and see Roger sleeping too. He slept well now and almost without stirring.

Thomas Hudson was happy to have them there and he did not want to think about them ever going away. He had been happy before they came and for a long time he had learned how to live and do his work without ever being more lonely than he could bear; but the boys' coming had broken up all the protective routine of life he had built and now he was used to its being broken. It had been a pleasant routine of working hard; of hours for doing things; places where things were kept and well-cared for; of meals and drinks to look forward to and new books to read and many old books to reread. It was a routine where the daily paper was an event when it arrived, but where it did not come so regularly that its nonarrival was a disappointment. It had many of the inventions that lonely people use to save themselves and even achieve unloneliness with and he had made the rules and kept the customs and used them consciously and unconsciously. But since the boys were here it had come as a great relief not to have to use them.

It would be bad, though, he thought, when he started all that again. He knew very well how it would be. For a part of a day it would be pleasant to have the house neat and to think alone and read without hearing other people talk and look at things without speaking of them and work properly without interruption and then he knew the loneliness would start. The three boys had moved into

a big part of him again that, when they moved out, would be empty and it would be very bad for a while.

His life was built solidly on work and on the living by the Gulf Stream and on the island and it would stand up all right. The aids and the habits and the customs were all to handle the loneliness and by now he knew he had opened a whole new country for the loneliness to move into once the boys were gone. There was nothing to do about that, though. That would all come later and if it was coming there was no good derived from any fearing of it now.

The summer, so far, had been a very lucky and good one. Everything had turned out well that could have turned out badly. He did not mean just spectacular things like Roger and the man on the dock, which could have come out very badly; nor David and the shark; but all sorts of small things had come out well. Happiness is often presented as being very dull but, he thought, lying awake, that is because dull people are sometimes very happy and intelligent people can and do go around making themselves and everyone else miserable. He had never found happiness dull. It always seemed more exciting than any other thing and capable of as great intensity as sorrow to those people who were capable of having it. This may not be true but he had believed it to be true for a long time and this summer they had experienced happiness for a month now and, already, in the nights, he was lonely for it before it had ever gone away.

He knew almost what there is to know about living alone and he had known what it is to live with someone that you loved and that loved you. He had always loved his children but he had never before realized how much he loved them and how bad it was that he did not live with them. He wished that he had them always and that he was married to Tom's mother. Then he thought that was as silly as wishing you had the wealth of the world to use as intelligently as you could; to be able to draw like Leonardo or paint as well as Pieter Brueghel; to have an absolute veto power against

all wickedness and be able to detect it infallibly and always justly when it starts and stop it with something as simple as pressing a button and while doing all this to be always healthy and to live forever and not decay in mind nor body. That was what he thought tonight would be some good things to have. But you could not have them any more than you could have the children; nor that who you loved could be alive if who you loved was dead or gone out from your life. Out of all the things you could not have there were some that you could have and one of those was to know when you were happy and to enjoy all of it while it was there and it was good. There were many things that made it for him when he had it. But just now, in this month, four people made it something that was as good, in some ways, as what the one person had once been able to make and so far there had been no sorrow. There had been no sorrow at all.

He did not even mind being awake now and remembered how it had been once when he had not been able to sleep and had lain in the night thinking about how he had lost the three boys and the fool he had been. He had thought how he had done things because he could not help them, or thought he could not help them, and had moved from one disastrous error of judgment to another that was worse. Now he accepted that as past and he was through with remorse. He had been a fool and he did not like fools. But that was over now and the boys were here and they loved him and he loved them. He would let it go at that for now.

They would go away at the end of their stay and he would have the loneliness again. But it would be only a stage on the way until they came back. If Roger would stay and work and keep him company it would be much easier. But he never knew about Roger nor what he would do. He smiled in the night thinking about Roger. Then he pitied him until he thought how disloyal it was and how Roger would hate pity and he stopped it and, hearing them all breathing quietly, he went to sleep.

But he woke again when the moonlight came on his face and he started to think about Roger and the women he had been in trouble with. He and Roger had both behaved stupidly and badly with women. He did not want to think of his own stupidities so he would think of Roger's.

I won't pity him, he thought, so it is not disloyal. I have been in enough trouble myself so that it is not disloyal to think about Roger's trouble. My own is different because I only really loved one woman and then lost her. I know well enough why. But I am through with thinking about that and it would probably be well not to think about Roger either. But tonight, because of the moonlight which, as always, would not let him sleep, he thought about him and his serious and comic troubles.

He thought about the last girl Roger had been in love with in Paris when they had both lived there and how very handsome and how very false he thought she was when Roger had brought her to the studio. For Roger there was nothing false about her. She was another of his illusions and all his great talent for being faithful was at her service until they were both free to marry. Then, in a month, everything that had always been clear about her to everyone who knew her well was suddenly clear to Roger. It must have been a difficult day when it first happened but the process of seeing her clearly had been going on for some time when Roger had come up to the studio. He had looked at the canvases for a while and spoken critically and very intelligently about them. Then he said, "I told that Ayers I wouldn't marry her."

"Good," Thomas Hudson had said. "Was it a surprise?"

"Not too much. There'd been some talk about it. She's a phony."

"No," Thomas Hudson had said. "How?"

"Right through. Any way you slice her."

"I thought you liked her."

"No. I tried to like her. But I couldn't make it except at the start. I was in love with her."

"What's in love?"

"You ought to know."

"Yes," Thomas Hudson had said. "I ought to know."

"Didn't you like her?"

"No. I couldn't stand her."

"Why didn't you say anything?"

"She was your girl. And you didn't ask me."

"I told her. But now I have to make it stick."

"You better pull out."

"No," he said. "Let her pull out."

"I only thought it might be simpler."

"This is my town as much as it is hers."

"I know," Thomas Hudson had said.

"You fought that one out, too, didn't you?" Roger had asked.

"Yes. You can't win on any of them. But you can fight them out. Why don't you just move your *quartier?"*

"I'm all right where I am," Roger had said.

"I remember the formula. *Je me trouve très bien ici et je vous prie de me laisser tranquille*."

"It starts with *je refuse de recevoir ma femme;"* Roger had said. "And you say it to a *huissier.* But this isn't a divorce. It's just breaking up."

"But isn't it going to be hard on you seeing her?"

"No. It's going to cure me. That and hearing her talk."

"What about her?"

"She can figure that out for herself. She's figured plenty out in the last four years."

"Five," Thomas Hudson had said.

"I don't think she was doing so much figuring the first year."

"You'd better clear out," Thomas Hudson had said. "If you don't think she was figuring the first year you'd better go a long way away."

"She writes very powerful letters. Going away would be worse.

No. I'm going to stay here and go on the town. I'm going to cure it for keeps."

After he and this girl split up in Paris, Roger was on the town; really on the town. He joked about it and made fun of himself; but he was very angry inside for having made such a profound fool of himself and he took his talent for being faithful to people, which was the best one he had, next to the ones for painting and writing and his various good human and animal traits, and beat and belabored that talent miserably. He was no good to anyone when he was on the town, especially to himself, and he knew it and hated it and he took pleasure in pulling down the pillars of the temple. It was a very good and strongly built temple and when it is constructed inside yourself it is not so easy to pull down. But he did as good a job as he could.

He had three girls in a row, no one of whom Thomas Hudson could be more than civil to and the only excuse for the last two might have been that they reminded him of the first one. This first one came right after the one he had just broken up with and she was sort of a world low for Roger although she went on to have a very successful career both in and out of bed and got herself a good piece of one of the third or fourth biggest fortunes in America and then married into another. She was named Thanis and Thomas Hudson remembered how Roger could never hear it without wincing and he wouldn't say it; no one ever heard him say the name. He used to call her Bitchy the Great. She was dark with a lovely skin and she looked like a very young, well-groomed, fastidiously vicious member of the Cenci family. She had the morals of a vacuum cleaner and the soul of a pari-mutuel machine, a good figure, and that lovely vicious face, and she only stayed with Roger long enough to get ready for her first good step upwards in life.

She was the first girl that had ever left him and that impressed Roger so that he had two more that looked almost enough like her to be members of the same family. He left both of them, though,

really left them, and Thomas Hudson thought that made him feel better; though not a hell of a lot better.

There are probably politer ways and more endearing ways of leaving a girl than simply, with no unpleasantness and never having been in any row, excusing yourself to go to the men's room at 21 and never coming back. But, as Roger said, he did settle the check downstairs and he loved to think of his last glimpse of her, sitting alone at the corner table in that decor that suited her so and that she loved so well.

He planned to leave the other one at the Stork, which was the place she really loved, but he was afraid M r. Billingsley might not like it and he needed to borrow some money from Mr. Billingsley.

"So where did you leave her?" Thomas Hudson had asked him.

"At El Morocco. So I could always remember her sitting there among those zebras. She loved El Morocco too," he said. "But I think it was the Cub Room that was graven on her heart."

After that he got mixed up with one of the most deceptive women Thomas Hudson had ever known. She was a complete change from his last three Cenci or Park Avenue Borgia types in looks. She looked really healthy and had tawny hair and long, good legs, a very good figure, and an intelligent, lively face. Though it was not beautiful it was much better-looking than most faces. And she had beautiful eyes. She was intelligent and very kindly and charming when you first knew her and she was a complete rummy. She was not a lush and her alcoholism had not showed yet. But she was just at it all of the time. Usually you can tell someone who is really drinking by their eyes and it always showed in Roger's immediately. But this girl, Kathleen, had really beautiful tawny eyes that went with her hair and the little pleasant freckles of health and good nature around her nose and her cheeks; and you never saw anything in them of what was going on. She looked like a girl who was sailing regularly or living some sort of very healthy outdoor life and she looked like a girl who was very happy. Instead she was just

a girl who was drinking. She was on a very strange voyage to somewhere and for a while she took Roger with her.

But he came up to the studio Thomas Hudson had rented in New York one morning with the back of his left hand covered with cigarette burns. It looked as though someone had been putting butts out by rubbing them against a tabletop; only the tabletop was the back of his hand.

"That's what she wanted to do last night," he said. "Have you got any iodine? I didn't like to take those things into a drugstore."

"Who's she?"

"Kathleen. The fresh outdoor type."

"You had to participate."

"It seemed to amuse her and we're supposed to amuse them."

"You're burned pretty badly."

"Not really. But I'm going to get out of this town for a while."

"You'll be taking yourself along wherever you go."

"Yes. But I won't be taking a lot of other people I know with me."

"Where are you going to go?"

"Out West for a while."

"Geography isn't any cure for what's the matter with you."

"No. But a healthy life and plenty of work won't hurt. Not drinking may not cure me. But drinking sure as hell isn't helping any now."

"Well, get the hell out then. Do you want to go to the ranch?"

"Do you still own it?"

"Part of it."

"Is it all right if I go out there?"

"Sure," Thomas Hudson had told him. "But it's rugged from now on until spring and spring isn't easy."

"I want it to be rugged," Roger had said. "I'm going to start new again."

"How many times is it now you've started new?"

"Too many," Roger had said. "And you don't have to rub it in."

So now he was going to start new again and how would it turn out this time? How could he think that wasting his talent and writing to order and following a formula that made money could fit him to write well and truly? Everything that a painter did or that a writer wrote was a part of his training and preparation for what he was to do. Roger had thrown away and abused and spent his talent. But perhaps he had enough animal strength and detached intelligence so that he could make another start. Any writer of talent should be able to write one good novel if he were honest, Thomas Hudson thought. But all the time that he should be training for it Roger had been misusing his talent and how could you know if his talent still was there? To say nothing of his métier, he thought. How can anyone think that you can neglect and despise, or have contempt for craftsmanship, however feigned the contempt may be, and then expect it to be at the service of your hands and of your brain when the time comes when you must have it. There is no substitute for it, Thomas Hudson thought. There is no substitute for talent either and you don't have to keep them in a chalice. The one is inside you. It is in your heart and in your head and in every part of you. So is the other, he thought. It is not just a set of tools that you have learned to work with.

It is luckier to be a painter, he thought, because you have more things to work with. We have the advantage of working with our hands and the métier we have mastered is an actual tangible thing. But Roger must start now to use what he has blunted and perverted and cheapened and all of it is in his head. But au fond he has something fine and sound and beautiful. That is a word I would need to be very careful of if I were a writer, he thought. But he has the thing that is the way he is and if he could write the way he fought on the dock it could be cruel but it would be very good. Then if he could think as soundly as he thought after that fight he would be very good.

The moonlight did not shine on the head of Thomas Hudson's bed anymore and gradually he stopped thinking about Roger. Thinking about him doesn't do any good. Either he can do it or he can't. But it would be wonderful if he could do it. I wish that I could help him. Maybe I can, he thought, and then he was asleep.

IX

When the sun woke Thomas Hudson he went down to the beach and swam and then had breakfast before the rest of them were up. Eddy said he did not think they would have much of a breeze and it might even be a calm. He said the gear was all in good shape on the boat and he had a boy out after bait.

Thomas Hudson asked him if he had tested the lines since the boat had not been out for big fish in quite a while and Eddy said he had tested them and taken off all the line that was rotten. He said they were going to have to get some more thirty-six thread line and plenty more twenty-four thread and Thomas Hudson promised to send for it. In the meantime Eddy had spliced enough good line on to replace the discarded line and both the big reels had all they would hold. He had cleaned and sharpened all of the big hooks and checked all the leaders and swivels.

"When did you do all this?"

"I sat up last night splicing," he said. "Then I worked on that new cast net. Couldn't sleep with the goddamn moon."

"Does a full moon bother you for sleeping too?"

"Gives me hell," Eddy said.

"Eddy do you think it's really bad for you to sleep with it shining on you?"

"That's what the old heads say. I don't know. Always makes me feel bad, anyway."

"Do you think we'll do anything today?"

"Never know. There's some awfully big fish out there this time of year. Are you going clean up to the Isaacs?"

“The boys want to go up there.”

“We ought to get going right after breakfast. I’m not figuring to cook lunch. I’ve got conch salad and potato salad and beer and I’ll make up sandwiches. We’ve got a ham that came over on the last run-boat and I’ve got some lettuce and we can use mustard and that chutney. Mustard doesn’t hurt kids, does it?”

“I don’t think so.”

“We never had it when I was a kid. Say, that chutney’s good, too. You ever eat it in a sandwich?”

“No,”

“I didn’t know what it was for when you first got it and I tried some of it like a marmalade. It’s damned good. I use it sometimes on grits.”

“Why don’t we have some curry pretty soon?”

“I got a leg of lamb coming on the next run-boat. Wait till we eat off it a couple of times—once, I guess, with that young Tom and Andrew eating, and we’ll have a curry.”

“Fine. What do you want me to do about getting off?”

“Nothing, Tom. Just get them going. Want me to make you a drink? You aren’t working today. Might as well have one.”

“I’ll drink a cold bottle of beer with breakfast.”

“Good thing. Cut that damn phlegm.”

“Is Joe here yet?”

“No. He went after the boy that’s gone for bait. I’ll put your breakfast out there.”

“No, let me take her.”

“No, go on in there and drink a cold bottle of beer and read the paper. I’ve got her all ironed out for you. I’ll bring the breakfast.”

Breakfast was corned beef hash, browned, with an egg on top of it, coffee and milk, and a big glass of chilled grapefruit juice. Thomas Hudson skipped the coffee and the grapefruit juice and drank a very cold bottle of Heineken beer with the hash.

“I’ll keep the juice cold for the kids,” Eddy said. “That’s some

beer, isn't it, for early in the morning?"

"It would be pretty easy to be a rummy, wouldn't it, Eddy?"

"You'd never make a rummy. You like to work too well."

"Drinking in the morning feels awfully good though."

"You're damned right it does. Especially something like that beer."

"I couldn't do it and work though."

"Well, you're not working today so what's the goddamn problem? Drink that one up and I'll get you another."

"No. One's all I want."

They got off by nine o'clock and went down the channel with the tide. Thomas Hudson was steering on the topside and he headed her out over the bar and ran straight out toward where he could see the dark line of the Gulf. The water was so calm and so very clear that they could see the bottom clearly in thirty fathoms, see that sea fans bent with the tide current, still see it, but cloudily, at forty fathoms, and then it deepened and was dark and they were out in the dark water of the stream.

"It looks like a wonderful day, papa," Tom said. "It looks like a good stream."

"It's a fine stream. Look at the little curl of the whirlpools along the edge."

"Isn't this the same water that we have in on the beach in front of the house?"

"Sometimes, Tommy. Now the tide is out and it has pushed the Stream out from in front of the mouth of the harbor. See in there along the beach, where there is no opening, it's made in again."

"It looks almost as blue in there as it is out here. What makes the Gulf water so blue?"

"It's a different density of water. It's an altogether different type of water."

"The depth makes it darker, though."

"Only when you look down into it. Sometimes the plankton in it

make it almost purple."

"Why?"

"Because they add red to the blue I think. I know they call the Red Sea red because the plankton make it look really red. They have terrific concentrations of them there."

"Did you like the Red Sea, papa?"

"I loved it. It was awfully hot but you never saw such wonderful reefs and it's full of fish on the two monsoons. You'd like it, Tom."

"I read two books about it in French by Mr. de Montfried. They were very good. He was in the slave trade. Not the white slave trade. The olden days slave trade. He's a friend of Mr. Davis."

"I know," Thomas Hudson said. "I know him, too."

"Mr. Davis told me that Mr. de Montfried came back to Paris one time from the slave trade and when he would take a lady out anywhere he would have the taxi driver put down the top of the taxi and he would steer the taxi driver wherever he wanted to go by the stars. Say Mr. de Montfried was on the Pont de la Concorde and he wanted to go to the Madeleine. He wouldn't just tell the taxi driver to take him to the Madeleine, or to cross the Place de la Concorde and go up the Rue Royale the way you or I would do it, papa. Mr. de Montfried would steer himself to the Madeleine by the North Star."

"I never heard that one about Mr. de Montfried," Thomas Hudson said. "I heard quite a lot of others."

"It's quite a complicated way to get around in Paris, don't you think? Mr. Davis wanted to go into the slave trade at one time with Mr. de Montfried but there was some sort of a hitch. I don't remember what it was. Yes, now I do. Mr. de Montfried had left the slave trade and gone into the opium trade. That was it."

"Didn't Mr. Davis want to go into the opium trade?"

"No. I remember he said he thought he'd leave the opium trade to Mr. De Quincey and Mr. Cocteau. He said they'd done so well in it that he didn't think it was right to disturb them. That was one of

those remarks that I couldn't understand. Papa, you explain anything to me that I ask but it used to slow the conversation up so much to be asking all the time that I would just remember certain things I didn't understand to ask about sometime and that's one of those things."

"You must have quite a backlog of those things."

"I've got hundreds of them. Possibly thousands. But I get rid of a lot of them every year by getting to understand them myself. But some I know I'll have to ask you about. At school this year I may write a list of them for an English composition. I've got some awfully good ones for a composition of that sort."

"Do you like school, Tom?"

"It's just one of those things you have to take. I don't think anyone likes school, do they, that

has ever done anything else?"

"I don't know. I hated it."

"Didn't you like art school either?"

"No. I liked to learn to draw but I didn't like the school part."

"I don't really mind it," Tom said. "But after you've spent your life with men like Mr. Joyce and Mr. Pascin and you and Mr. Davis, being with boys seems sort of juvenile."

"You have fun, though, don't you?"

"Oh yes. I have lots of friends and I like any of the sports that aren't built around throwing or catching balls and I study quite hard. But papa, it isn't much of a life."

"That was the way I always felt about it," Thomas Hudson said. "You liven it up as much as you can, though."

"I do. I liven it up all I can and still stay in it. Sometimes it's a pretty close thing, though."

Thomas Hudson looked astern where the wake ran crisply in the calm sea and the two baits from the outriggers were dragging; dipping and leaping in the curl of the waves the wake raised as it cut the calm. David and Andrew sat in the two fishing chairs

holding rods. Thomas Hudson saw their backs. Their faces were astern watching the baits. He looked ahead at some bonito jumping, not working and threshing the water, but coming up out and dropping back into the water singly and in pairs, making hardly any disturbance of the surface as they rose, shining in the sun, and returning, heavy heads down, to enter the water almost without splash.

"Fish!" Thomas Hudson heard young Tom shout. "Fish! Fish! There he comes up. Behind you, Dave. Watch him!"

Thomas Hudson saw a huge boil in the water but could not see the fish. David had the rod butt in the gimble and was looking up at the clothespin on the outrigger line. Thomas Hudson saw the line fall from the outrigger in a long, slow loop that tightened as it hit the water and now was racing out at a slant, slicing the water as it went.

"Hit him, Dave. Hit him hard," Eddy called from the companionway.

"Hit him, Dave. For God's sake hit him," Andrew begged.

"Shut up," David said. "I'm handling him."

He hadn't struck yet and the line was steadily going out at that angle, the rod bowed, the boy holding back on it as the line moved out. Thomas Hudson had throttled the motors down so they were barely turning over.

"Oh for God's sake, hit him," Andrew pleaded. "Or let me hit him."

David just held back on the rod and watched the line moving out at that same steady angle. He had loosened the drag.

"He's a broadbill, papa," he said without looking up. "I saw his sword when he took it."

"Honest to God?" Andrew asked. "Oh boy."

"I think you ought to hit him now," Roger was standing with the boy now. He had the back out of the chair and he was buckling the harness on the reel. "Hit him now, Dave, and really hit him."

“Do you think he’s had it long enough?” David asked. “You don’t think he’s just carrying it in his mouth and swimming with it?”

“I think you better hit him before he spits it out.”

David braced his feet, tightened the drag well down with his right hand, and struck back hard against the great weight. He struck again and again bending the rod like a bow. The line moved out steadily. He had made no impression on the fish.

“Hit him again, Dave,” Roger said. “Really put it into him.” David struck again with all his strength and the line started zizzing out, the rod bent so that he could hardly hold it.

“Oh God,” he said devoutly. “I think I’ve got it into him.”

“Ease up on your drag,” Roger told him. “Turn with him, Tom, and watch the line.”

“Turn with him and watch the line,” Thomas Hudson repeated. “You all right, Dave?”

“I’m wonderful, papa,” Dave said. “Oh God, if I can catch this fish.”

Thomas Hudson swung the boat around almost on her stern.

Dave’s line was fading off the reel and Thomas Hudson moved up on the fish.

“Tighten up and get that line in now,” Roger said. “Work on him, Dave.”

David was lifting and reeling as he lowered, lifting and reeling as he lowered, as regularly as a machine, and was getting back a good quantity of line onto his reel.

“Nobody in our family’s ever caught a broadbill,” Andrew said.

“Oh keep your mouth off him, please,” David said. “Don’t put your mouth on him.”

“I won’t,” Andrew said. “I’ve been doing nothing but pray ever since you hooked him.”

“Do you think his mouth will hold?” young Tom whispered to his father, who was holding the wheel and looking down into the stern and watching the slant of the white line in the dark water.

“I hope so. Dave isn’t strong enough to be rough with him.”

“I’ll do anything if we can get him,” young Tom said. “Anything. I’ll give up anything. I’ll promise anything. Get him some water, Andy.”

“I’ve got some,” Eddy said. “Stay with him, old Dave boy.”

“I don’t want him any closer,” Roger called up. He was a great fisherman and he and Thomas Hudson understood each other perfectly in a boat.

“I’ll put him astern,” Thomas Hudson called and swung the boat around very softly and easily so the stern hardly disturbed the calm sea.

The fish was sounding now and Thomas Hudson backed the boat very slowly to ease the pressure on the line all that he could. But with only a touch of reverse with the stern moving slowly toward the fish the angle was all gone from the line and the rod tip was pointing straight down and the line kept going out in a series of steady jerks, the rod bucking each time in David’s hands. Thomas Hudson slipped the boat ahead just a thought so that the boy would not have the line so straight up and down in the water. He knew how it was pulling on his back in that position, but he had to save all the line he could.

“I can’t put any more drag on or it will break,” David said.

“What will he do, Mr. Davis?”

“He’ll just keep on going down until you stop him,” Roger said. “Or until he stops. Then you’ve got to try to get him up.”

The line kept going out and down, out and down, out and down. The rod was bent so far it looked as though it must break and the line was taut as a tuned cello string and there was not much more of it on the reel.

“What can I do, papa?”

“Nothing. You’re doing what there is to do.”

“Won’t he hit the bottom?” Andrew asked.

“There isn’t any bottom,” Roger told him.

“You hold him, Davy,” Eddy said. “He’ll get sick of it and come up.”

“These damned straps are killing me,” David said. “They cut my shoulders off.”

“Do you want me to take him?” Andrew asked.

“No, you fool,” David said. “I just said what they were doing to me. I don’t care about it.”

“See if you can rig him the kidney harness,” Thomas Hudson called down to Eddy. “You can tie it on with line if the straps are too long.”

Eddy wrapped the broad, quilted pad across the small of the boy’s back and fastened the rings on the web straps that ran across it to the reel with heavy line.

“That’s much better,” David said. “Thank you very much, Eddy.”

“Now you can hold him with your back as well as your shoulders,” Eddy told him.

“But there isn’t going to be any line.” David said. “Oh Goddam him, why does he have to keep on sounding?”

“Tom,” Eddy called up. “Ease her a little northwest. I think he’s moving.”

Thomas Hudson turned the wheel and moved her softly, slowly, softly out to sea. There was a big patch of yellow gulf weed ahead with a bird on it and the water was calm and so blue and clear that, as you looked down into it, there were lights in it like the reflections from a prism.

“You see?” Eddy told David. “You’re not losing any now.”

The boy could not raise the rod; but the line was no longer jerking down into the water. It was as taut as ever and there weren’t fifty yards left on the reel. But it was not going out. David was holding him and the boat was on his course. Thomas Hudson could see the just perceptible slant of the white line deep down in the blue water as the boat barely moved, its engines turning so quietly he could not hear them.

"You see, Davy, he went down to where he liked it and now he's moving out to where he wants to go. Pretty soon you'll get some line on him."

The boy's brown back was arched, the rod bent, the line moved slowly through the water, and the boat moved slowly on the surface, and a quarter of a mile below the great fish was swimming. The gull left the patch of weed and flew toward the boat. He flew around Thomas Hudson's head while he steered, then headed off toward another patch of yellow weed on the water.

"Try to get some on him now," Roger told the boy. "If you can hold him you can get some."

"Put her ahead just a touch more," Eddy called to the bridge and Thomas Hudson eased her ahead as softly as he could.

David lifted and lifted, but the rod only bent and the line only tightened. It was as though he were hooked to a moving anchor.

"Never mind," Roger told him. "You'll get it later. How are you, Davy?"

"I'm fine," David said. "With that harness across my back I'm fine."

"Do you think you can stay with him?" Andrew asked.

"Oh shut up," David said. "Eddy, can I have a drink of water?"

"Where'd I put it?" Eddy asked. "I guess I spilled it."

"I'll get one," Andrew went below.

"Can I do anything, Dave?" young Tom asked. "I'm going up so I won't be in the way."

"No, Tom. Goddam it, *why* can't I lift on him?"

"He's an awfully big fish, Dave," Roger told him. "You can't bull him around. You've got to lead him and try to convince him where he has to come."

"You tell me what to do and I'll do it until I die," David said. "I trust you."

"Don't talk about dying," Roger said. "That's no way to talk."

"I mean it," David said. "I mean it really."

Young Tom came back up on the flying bridge with his father. They were looking down at David, bent and harnessed to his fish, with Roger standing by him and Eddy holding the chair. Andrew was putting the glass of water to Dave's mouth. He took some in and spat it out.

"Pour some on my wrists, will you, Andy?" he asked.

"Papa, do you think he can really stay with this fish?" Tom said to his father very softly.

"It's an awful lot of fish for him."

"It scares me," Tom said. "I love David and I don't want any damned fish to kill him."

"Neither do I and neither does Roger and neither does Eddy."

"Well we've got to look after him. If he gets in really bad shape, Mr. Davis ought to take the fish or you take him."

"He's a long way from bad shape yet."

"But you don't know him like we do. He *would* kill himself to get the fish."

"Don't worry, Tom."

"I can't help it," young Tom said. "I'm the one in the family that always worries. I hope I'll get over it."

"I wouldn't worry about this now," Thomas Hudson said.

"But papa, how is a boy like David going to catch a fish like that? He's never caught anything bigger than sailfish and amberjack."

"The fish will get tired. It's the fish that has the hook in his mouth."

"But he's monstrous," Tom said. "And Dave's fastened to him just as much as he is to Dave. It's so wonderful I can't believe it if Dave catches him, but I wish you or Mr. Davis had him."

"Dave's doing all right."

They were getting further out to sea all the time but it was still a flat calm. There were many patches of Gulf weed now, sunburned so that they were yellow on the purple water, and sometimes the

slow-moving taut white line ran through a patch of weed and Eddy reached down and cleared any weed that clung to the line. As he leaned over the coaming and pulled the yellow weed off the line and tossed it away, Thomas Hudson saw his wrinkled red brown neck and old felt hat and heard him say to Dave, “He’s practically towing the boat, Davy. He’s way down there tiring himself and tiring himself all the time.”

“He’s tiring me, too,” David said.

“You got a headache?” Eddy asked.

“No.”

“Get a cap for him,” Roger said.

“I don’t want it, Mr. Davis. I’d rather have some water on my head.”

Eddy dipped a bucket of sea water and wet the boy’s head carefully with his cupped hand, soaking his head and pushing the hair back out of his eyes.

“You say if you get a headache,” he told him.

“I’m fine,” David said. “You tell me what to do, Mr. Davis.”

“See if you can get any line on him,” Roger said.

David tried and tried and tried again but he could not raise the fish an inch.

“All right. Save your strength,” Roger told him. Then to Eddy, “Soak a cap and put it on him. This is a hell of a hot day with the calm.”

Eddy dipped a long-visored cap in the bucket of salt water and put it on Dave’s head.

“The salt water gets in my eyes, Mr. Davis. Really. I’m sorry.”

“I’ll wipe it out with some fresh,” Eddy said. “Give me a handkerchief, Roger. You go get some ice water, Andy.”

While the boy hung there, his legs braced, his body arched against the strain, the boat kept moving slowly out to sea. To the westward a school of either bonito or albacore were troubling the calm of the surface and terns commenced to come flying, calling to

each other as they flew. But the school of fish went down and the terns lit on the calm water to wait for the fish to come up again. Eddy had wiped the boy's face and now was dipping the handkerchief in the glass of ice water and laying it across David's neck. Then he cooled his wrists with it and then, with the handkerchief soaked in ice water again, wrung it out while he pressed it against the back of David's neck.

"You say if you have a headache," Eddy told him. "That ain't quitting. That's just sense. This is a hell of a goddamn hot sun when it's a calm."

"I'm all right," David told him. "I hurt bad in the shoulders and the arms is all."

"That's natural," Eddy said. "That'll make a man out of you. What we don't want is for you to get no sunstroke nor bust any gut."

"What will he do now, Mr. Davis?" David asked. His voice sounded dry.

"Maybe just what he's doing. Or he might start to circle. Or he may come up."

"It's a damn shame he sounded so deep at the start so we haven't any line to maneuver him with," Thomas Hudson said to Roger.

"Dave stopped him is the main thing," Roger said. "Pretty soon the fish will change his mind. Then we'll work on him. See if you can get any just once, Dave."

David tried but he could not raise him at all.

"He'll come up," Eddy said. "You'll see. All of a sudden there won't be anything to it, Davy. Want to rinse your mouth out?"

David nodded his head. He had reached the breath-saving stage.

"Spit it out," Eddy said. "Swallow just a little." He turned to Roger. "One hour even," he said. "Is your head all right, Davy?"

The boy nodded.

"What do you think, papa?" young Tom said to his father.

“Truly?”

“He looks pretty good to me,” his father said. “Eddy wouldn’t let anything happen to him.”

“No, I guess not,” Tom agreed. “I wish I could do something useful. I’m going to get Eddy a drink.”

“Get me one, too, please.”

“Oh good. I’ll make one for Mr. Davis, too.”

“I don’t think he wants one.”

“Well I’ll ask him.”

“Try him once more, Davy,” Roger said very quietly, and the boy lifted with all his strength, holding the sides of the spool of the reel with his hands.

“You got an inch,” Roger said. “Take it in and see if you can get some more.”

Now the real fight began. Before David had only been holding him while the fish moved out to sea and the boat moved with him. But now he had to lift, let the rod straighten with the line he had gained, and then lower the rod slowly while he took the line in by reeling.

“Don’t try to do it too fast,” Roger told him. “Don’t rush yourself. Just keep it steady.”

The boy was bending forward and pulling up from the soles of his feet, using all the leverage of his body and all of what weight he had on each lift; then reeling fast with his right hand as he lowered.

“David fishes awfully pretty,” young Tom said. “He’s fished since he was a little boy but I didn’t know he could fish this well. He always makes fun of himself because he can’t play games. But look at him now.”

“The hell with games,” Thomas Hudson said. “What did you say, Roger?”

“Go ahead on him just a touch,” Roger called up.

“Ahead on him just a touch,” Thomas Hudson repeated and on the next lift, as they nudged slowly forward, David recovered more

line.

"Don't you like games either, papa?" Tom asked.

"I used to. Very much. But not anymore."

"I like tennis and fencing," Tom said. "The throw-and-catch ball games are the ones I don't like. That's from being brought up in Europe I guess. I'll bet David could be a fine fencer if he wanted to learn because he has so much brains. But he doesn't want to learn. All he wants to do is read and fish and shoot and tie flies. He shoots better than Andy does in the field. He can tie beautiful flies too. Am I bothering you, papa, talking so much?"

"Of course not, Tom."

He was holding to the rail of the flying bridge and looking aft as his father was and his father put one hand on his shoulder. It was salty from the buckets of sea water the boys had thrown over each other on the stern before the fish struck. The salt was very fine and felt faintly sandy under his hand.

"You see I get so nervous watching David I talk to take my mind off it. I'd rather have David catch that fish than anything on earth."

"He's a hell of a fish. Wait till we see him."

"I saw one one time when I was fishing with you years ago. He hit a big mackerel bait with his sword and he jumped and threw the hook. He was enormous and I used to dream about him. I'll go down and make the drinks."

"There's no hurry," his father told him.

Down in the backless fighting chair, set in its swivel base, David braced his feet against the stern and lifted with his arms, back, withers, and thighs; then lowered and reeled and lifted again. Steadily, an inch, two inches, three inches at a time he was getting more and more line on the reel.

"Is your head all right?" Eddy, who was holding the arms of the chair to steady it, asked him.

David nodded. Eddy put his hand on the top of the boy's head and felt his cap.

“Cap’s still wet,” he said. “You’re giving him hell, Davy. Just like a machine.”

“It’s easier now than holding him,” David said, his voice still dry.

“Sure,” Eddy told him. “Something gives now. Other way it was just pulling your back out by the roots.”

“Don’t work him any faster than you can,” Roger said. “You’re doing wonderfully, Dave.”

“Will we gaff him when he comes up this time?” Andrew asked.

“Oh keep your mouth off of him, please,” David said.

“I wasn’t trying to mouth him.”

“Oh just shut up, Andy, please. I’m sorry.”

Andrew came climbing up topside. He had on one of the long-peaked caps but under it his father could see his eyes were wet and the boy turned his head away because his lips trembled.

“You didn’t say anything bad,” Thomas Hudson told him. Andrew spoke with his head turned away. “Now if he loses him he’ll think I mouthed him,” he said bitterly. “All I wanted to do was help get everything ready.”

“It’s natural for Dave to be nervous,” his father told him. “He’s trying to be polite.”

“I know it,” Andrew said. “He’s fighting him just as good as Mr. Davis could. I just felt bad he could think that.”

“Lots of people are irritable with a big fish. This is the first one Dave’s ever had.”

“You’re always polite and Mr. Davis is always polite.”

“We didn’t use to be. When we were learning to fish big fish together we used to be excited and rude and sarcastic. We both used to be terrible.”

“Truly?”

“Sure. Truly. We used to suffer and act as though everybody was against us. That’s the natural way to be. The other’s discipline or good sense when you learn. We started to be polite because we

found we couldn't catch big fish being rude and excited. And if we did, it wasn't any fun. We were both really awful though; excited and sore and misunderstood and it wasn't any fun. So now we always fight them politely. We talked it over and decided we'd be polite no matter what."

"I'll be polite," Andrew said. "But it's hard sometimes with Dave. Papa, do you think he can *really* get him? That it isn't just like a dream or something?"

"Let's not talk about it."

"Have I said something wrong again?"

"No. Only it always seems bad luck to talk that way. We got it from the old fishermen. I don't know what started it."

"I'll be careful."

"Here's your drink, papa," Tom said, handing it up from below. The glass was wrapped in a triple thickness of paper towel with a rubber band around to hold the paper tight against the glass and keep the ice from melting. "I put lime, bitters, and no sugar in it. Is that how you want it? Or can I change it?"

"That's fine. Did you make it with coconut water?"

"Yes, and I made Eddy a whisky. Mr. Davis didn't want anything. Are you staying up there, Andy?"

"No. I'm coming down."

Tom climbed up and Andrew went down.

Looking back over the stern, Thomas Hudson noticed the line starting to slant up in the water.

"Watch it, Roger," he called. "It looks like he's coming up."

"He's coming up!" Eddy yelled. He had seen the slant in the line too. "Watch your wheel."

Thomas Hudson looked down at the spool of the reel to see how much line there was to maneuver with. It was not yet a quarter full and as he watched it started to whiz off and Thomas Hudson started backing, turning sharp toward the slant of the line, well under way as Eddy yelled, "Back on him, Tom. The son of a bitch is coming up.

We ain't got no line to turn."

"Keep your rod up," Roger said to David. "Don't let him get it down." Then to Thomas Hudson, "Back on him all you can, Tom. You're going right. Give her all she'll take."

Then, astern of the boat and off to starboard, the calm of the ocean broke open and the great fish rose out of it, rising, shining dark blue and silver, seeming to come endlessly out of the water, unbelievable as his length and bulk rose out of the sea into the air and seemed to hang there until he fell with a splash that drove the water up high and white.

"Oh God," David said. "Did you see him?"

"His sword's as long as I am," Andrew said in awe.

"He's so beautiful," Tom said. "He's much better than the one I had in the dream."

"Keep backing on him," Roger said to Thomas Hudson.

Then to David, "Try and get some line out of that belly. He came up from way down and there's a big belly of line and you can get some of it."

Thomas Hudson, backing fast onto the fish, had stopped the line going out and now David was lifting, lowering, and reeling, and the line was coming onto the reel in sweeps as fast as he could turn the reel handle.

"Slow her down," Roger said. "We don't want to get over him."

"Son of a bitch'll weigh a thousand pounds," Eddy said. "Get that easy line in, Davy boy."

The ocean was flat and empty where he had jumped but the circle made where the water had been broken was still widening.

"Did you see the water he threw when he jumped, papa?" young Tom asked his father. "It was like the whole sea bursting open."

"Did you see the way he seemed to climb up and up, Tom? Did you ever see such a blue and that wonderful silver on him?"

"His sword is blue too," young Tom said. "The whole back of it is blue. Will he really weigh a thousand pounds, Eddy?" he called

down.

"I think he will. Nobody can say. But he'll weigh something awful."

"Get all the line you can, Davy, now while it's cheap," Roger told him. "You're getting it fine."

The boy was working like a machine again, recovering line from the great bulge of line in the water and the boat was backing so slowly that the movement was barely perceptible.

"What will he do now, papa?" Tom asked his father.

Thomas Hudson was watching the slant of the line in the water and thinking it would be safer to go ahead just a little but he knew how Roger had suffered with so much line out. The fish had only needed to make one steady rush to strip all the line from the reel and break off and now Roger was taking chances to get a reserve of line. As Thomas Hudson watched the line, he saw that David had the reel nearly half full and that he was still gaining.

"What did you say?" Thomas Hudson asked his boy Tom. "What do you think he'll do now?"

"Wait a minute, Tom," his father said and called down to Roger. "I'm afraid we're going to get over him, kid."

"Then put her ahead easy," Roger said.

"Ahead easy," Thomas Hudson repeated. David stopped getting in so much line but the fish was in a safer position.

Then the line started to go out again and Roger called up, "Throw her out," and Thomas Hudson threw out the clutches and let the motors idle.

"She's out," he said. Roger was bending over David and the boy was braced and holding back on the rod and the line was slipping steadily away.

"Tighten on him a little bit, Davy," Roger said. "We'll make him work for it."

"I don't want him to break," David said. But he tightened the drag.

“He won’t break,” Roger told him. “Not with that drag.” The line kept going out but the rod was bent heavier and the boy was braced back holding against the pressure with his bare feet against the wood of the stern. Then the line stopped going out.

“Now you can get some,” Roger told the boy. “He’s circling and this is the in-turn. Get back all you can.”

The boy lowered and reeled, then lifted; let the rod straighten; lowered and reeled. He was getting line beautifully again.

“Am I doing all right?” he asked.

“You’re doing wonderful,” Eddy told him. “He’s hooked deep, Davy. I could see when he jumped.”

Then, while the boy was lifting, the line started to go out again.

“Hell,” David said.

“That’s OK,” Roger told him. “That’s what’s supposed to happen. He’s on the out-turn now. He circled in toward you and you got line. Now he’s taking it back.”

Steadily, slowly, with David holding him with all the strain the line would take, the fish took out all the line the boy had just recovered and a little more. Then the boy held him.

“All right. Get to work on him,” Roger said quietly. “He widened his circle a little bit but he’s on the in-swing now.”

Thomas Hudson was using the engines only occasionally now to keep the fish astern. He was trying to do everything for the boy that the boat could do and he was trusting the boy and the fight to Roger. As he saw it there was no other thing to do.

On the next circle the fish gained a little line again. On the circle after that he gained too. But the boy still had almost half the line on the reel. He was still working the fish exactly as he should and delivering each time Roger asked him to do something. But he was getting very tired and the sweat and salt water had made salty blotches on his brown back and shoulders.

“Two hours even,” Eddy said to Roger. “How’s your head, Davy?”

“All right.”

“Not ache?”

The boy shook his head.

“You better drink some water this time,” Eddy said.

David nodded and drank when Andrew put the glass to his lips.

“How do you feel, Davy, really?” Roger asked him, bending close over him.

“Fine. All except my back and legs and arms.” He shut his eyes for an instant and held to the bucking of the rod as the line went out against the heavy drag.

“I don’t want to talk,” he said.

“You can get some on him now,” Roger told him and the boy went back to work.

“David’s a saint and a martyr,” Tom said to his father. “Boys don’t have brothers like David. Do you mind if I talk, papa? I’m awfully nervous about this.”

“Go ahead and talk, Tommy. We’re both worried.”

“He’s always been wonderful, you know,” Tom said. “He’s not a damn genius nor an athlete like Andy. He’s just wonderful. I know you love him the most and that’s right because he’s the best of us and I know this must be good for him or you wouldn’t let him do it. But it certainly makes me nervous.”

Thomas Hudson put an arm around his shoulder and steered, looking astern with only one hand on the wheel.

“The trouble is, Tommy, what it would do to him if we made him give it up. Roger and Eddy know everything about what they’re doing and I know they love him and wouldn’t have him do what he can’t do.”

“But there is no limit with him, papa. Truly. He’ll always do what he can’t do.”

“You trust me and I’ll trust Roger and Eddy.”

“All right. But I’m going to pray for him now.”

“You do,” said Thomas Hudson. “Why did you say I loved him

the best?"

"You ought to."

"I've loved you the longest."

"Let's not think about me nor you. Let's both of us pray for Davy."

"Good," said Thomas Hudson. "Now look. We hooked him right at noon. There's going to be some shade now. I think we've got some already. I'm going to work her around very softly and put Davy in the shade."

Thomas Hudson called down to Roger. "If it's OK with you, Roge, I'd like to work her around slow and put Dave in the shade. I don't think it will make any difference with the fish the way he's circling and we'll be on his real course."

"Fine," Roger said. "I should have thought of it."

"There hasn't been any shade until now," Thomas Hudson said. He worked the boat around so slowly, just swinging her on her stern, that they lost almost no line by the maneuver. David's head and shoulders were now shaded by the aft part of the house. Eddy was wiping the boy's neck and shoulders with a towel and putting alcohol on his back and on the back of his neck.

"How's that, Dave?" young Tom called down to him.

"Wonderful," David said.

"I feel better about him now," young Tom said. "You know at school somebody said David was my half-brother, not my real brother, and I told him we didn't have half-brothers in our family. I wish I didn't worry so much though, papa."

"You'll get over it."

"In a family like ours somebody has to worry," young Tom said. "But I never worry about you anymore. It's David now. I guess I better make a couple of more drinks. I can pray while I make them. Do you want one, papa?"

"I'd love one."

"Eddy probably needs one pretty badly," the boy said. "It must

be nearly three hours. Eddy's only had one drink in three hours. I've certainly been remiss about things. Why do you suppose Mr. Davis wouldn't take one, papa?"

"I didn't think he would take one while David was going through all that."

"Maybe he will now Dave's in the shade. I'll try him now anyway."

He went below.

"I don't think so, Tommy," Thomas Hudson heard Roger say.

"You haven't had one all day, Mr. Davis," Tom urged.

"Thanks, Tommy," Roger said. "You drink a bottle of beer for me." Then he called up to the wheel. "Put her ahead a little easy, Tom. He's coming better on this tack."

"Ahead a little easy," Thomas Hudson repeated.

The fish was still circling deep, but in the direction the boat was headed now he was shortening the circle. It was the direction he wanted to move in. Now, too, it was easier to see the slant of the line. It was easier to see its true slant much deeper in the dark water with the sun behind the boat and Thomas Hudson felt safer steering with the fish. He thought how fortunate it was that the day was calm for he knew David could never have taken the punishment that he would have had if he were hooked to such a fish in even a moderate sea. Now that David was in the shade and the sea stayed calm he began to feel better about it all.

"Thanks, Tommy," he heard Eddy say and then the boy climbed up with his paper-wrapped glass and Thomas Hudson tasted, took a swallow and felt the cold that had the sharpness of the lime, the aromatic varnishy taste of the Angostura and the gin stiffening the lightness of the ice-cold coconut water.

"Is it all right, papa?" the boy asked. He had a bottle of beer from the icebox that was perspiring cold drops in the sun.

"It's excellent," his father told him. "You put in plenty of gin too."

“I have to,” young Tom said. “Because the ice melts so fast. We ought to have some sort of insulated holders for the glasses so the ice wouldn’t melt. I’m going to work out something at school. I think I could make them out of cork blocks. Maybe I can make them for you for Christmas.”

“Look at Dave now,” his father said.

David was working on the fish as though he had just started the fight.

“Look how sort of slab-sided he is,” young Tom said. “His chest and his back are all the same. He looks sort of like he was glued together. But he’s got the longest arm muscles you could ever see. They’re just as long on the back of his arms as on the front. The biceps and the triceps I mean. He’s certainly built strangely, papa. He’s a strange boy and he’s the best damn brother you can have.”

Down in the cockpit Eddy had drained his glass and was wiping David’s back with a towel again. Then he wiped his chest and his long arms.

“You all right, Davy?” David nodded.

“Listen,” Eddy told him, “I’ve seen a grown man, strong, shoulders like a bull, yellow-out and quit on half the work you’ve put in on that fish already.”

David kept on working.

“Big man. Your Dad and Roger both know him. Trained for it. Fishing all the time. Hooked the biggest goddamn fish a man ever hooked and yellowed out and quit on him just because he hurt. Fish made him hurt so he quit. You just keep it steady, Davy.”

David did not say anything. He was saving his breath and pumping, lowering, raising, and reeling.

“This damn fish is so strong because he’s a he,” Eddy told him. “If it was a she it would have quit long ago. It would have bust its insides or its heart or burst its roe. In this kind of fish the he is the strongest. In lots of other fish it’s the she that is strongest. But not with broadbill. He’s awfully strong, Davy. But you’ll get him.”

The line started to go out again and David shut his eyes a moment, braced his bare feet against the wood, hung back against the rod, and rested.

"That's right, Davy," Eddy said. "Only work when you're working. He's just circling. But the drag makes him work for it and it's tiring him all the time."

Eddy turned his head and looked below and Thomas Hudson knew from the way he squinted his eyes that he was looking at the big brass clock on the cabin wall.

"It's five over three, Roger," he said. "You've been with him three hours and five minutes, Davy old boy."

They were at the point where David should have started to gain line. But instead the line was going out steadily.

"He's sounding again," Roger said. "Watch yourself, Davy. Can you see the line OK, Tom?"

"I can see it OK," Thomas Hudson told him. It was not yet at a very steep slant and he could see it a long way down in the water from the top of the house.

"He may want to go down to die," Thomas Hudson told his oldest boy, speaking very low. "That would ruin Dave."

Young Tom shook his head and bit his lips.

"Hold him all you can, Dave," Thomas Hudson heard Roger say. "Tighten up on him and give it all it will take."

The boy tightened up the drag almost to the breaking point of the rod and line and then hung on, bracing himself to take the punishment the best he could, while the line went out and out and down and down.

"When you stop him this time I think you will have whipped him," Roger told David. "Throw her out, Tom."

"She's cut," Thomas Hudson said. "But I think I could save a little backing."

"OK. Try it."

"Backing now," Thomas Hudson said. They saved a little line by

backing but not much, and the line was getting terribly straight up and down. There was less on the reel now than at the worst time before.

"You'll have to get out on the stern, Davy," Roger said. "You'll have to loosen the drag up a little to get the butt out."

David loosened the drag.

"Now get the butt into your butt rest. You hold him around the waist, Eddy."

"Oh God, papa," young Tom said. "He's taking it all right to the bottom now."

David was on his knees on the low stern now, the rod bent so that its tip was underwater, its butt in the leather socket of the butt rest that was strapped around his waist. Andrew was holding onto David's feet and Roger knelt beside him watching the line in the water and the little there was on the reel. He shook his head at Thomas Hudson.

There was not twenty yards more on the reel and David was pulled down with half the rod underwater now. Then there was barely fifteen yards on the reel. Now there was not ten yards. Then the line stopped going out. The boy was still bent far over the stern and most of the rod was in the water. But no line was going out.

"Get him back into the chair, Eddy. Easy. Easy," Roger said. "When you can, I mean. He's stopped him."

Eddy helped David back into the fighting chair, holding him around the waist so that a sudden lurch by the fish would not pull the boy overboard. Eddy eased him into the chair and David got the rod butt into the gimbel socket and braced with his feet and pulled back on the rod. The fish lifted a little.

"Only pull when you are going to get some line," Roger told David. "Let him pull the rest of the time. Try and rest inside the action except when you are working on him."

"You've got him, Davy," Eddy said. "You're getting it on him all the time. Just take it slow and easy and you'll kill him."

Thomas Hudson eased the boat a little forward to put the fish further astern. There was good shadow now over all the stern. The boat was working steadily further out to sea and no wind troubled the surface.

"Papa," young Tom said to his father. "I was looking at his feet when I made the drinks. They're bleeding."

"He's chafed them pulling against the wood."

"Do you think I could put a pillow there? A cushion for him to pull against?"

"Go down and ask Eddy," Thomas Hudson said. "But don't interrupt Dave."

It was well into the fourth hour of the fight now. The boat was still working out to sea and David, with Roger holding the back of his chair now, was raising the fish steadily. David looked stronger now than he had an hour before but Thomas Hudson could see where his heels showed the blood that had run down from the soles of his feet. It looked varnished in the sun.

"How's your feet, Davy?" Eddy asked.

"They don't hurt," David said. "What hurts is my hands and arms and my back."

"I could put a cushion under them."

David shook his head.

"I think they'd stick," he said. "They're sticky. They don't hurt. Really."

Young Tom came up to the top side and said, "He's wearing the bottoms of his feet right off. He's getting his hands bad too. He's had blisters and now they're all open. Gee, papa. I don't know."

"It's the same as if he had to paddle against a stiff current, Tommy. Or if he had to keep going up a mountain or stick with a horse after he was awfully tired."

"I know it. But just watching it and not doing it seems so sort of awful when it's your brother."

"I know it, Tommy. But there is a time boys have to do things if

they are ever going to be men. That's where Dave is now."

"I know it. But when I see his feet and his hands I don't know, papa."

"If you had the fish would you want Roger or me to take him away from you?"

"No. I'd want to stay with him till I died. But to see it with Davy is different."

"We have to think about how he feels," his father told him. "And what's important to him."

"I know," young Tom said hopelessly. "But to me it's just Davy. I wish the world wasn't the way it is and that things didn't have to happen to brothers."

"I do too," Thomas Hudson said. "You're an awfully good boy, Tommy. But please know I would have stopped this long ago except that I know that if David catches this fish he'll have something inside him for all his life and it will make everything else easier."

Just then Eddy spoke. He had been looking behind him into the cabin again.

"Four hours even, Roger," he said. "You better take some water, Davy. How do you feel?"

"Fine," David said.

"I know what I'll do that is practical," young Tom said. "I'll make a drink for Eddy. Do you want one, papa?"

"No. I'll skip this one," Thomas Hudson said.

Young Tom went below and Thomas Hudson watched David working slowly, tiredly but steadily; Roger bending over him and speaking to him in a low voice; Eddy out on the stern watching the slant of the line in the water. Thomas Hudson tried to picture how it would be down where the swordfish was swimming. It was dark of course but probably the fish could see as a horse can see. It would be very cold.

He wondered if the fish was alone or if there could be another fish swimming with him. They had seen no other fish but that did

not prove this fish was alone. There might be another with him in the dark and the cold.

Thomas Hudson wondered why the fish had stopped when he had gone so deep the last time. Did the fish reach his maximum possible depth the way a plane reached its ceiling? Or had the pulling against the bend of the rod, the heavy drag on the line, and the resistance of its friction in the water discouraged him so that now he swam quietly in the direction he wished to go? Was he only rising a little, steadily, as David lifted on him; rising docilely to ease the unpleasant tension that held him? Thomas Hudson thought that was probably the way it was and that David might have great trouble with him yet if the fish was still strong.

Young Tom had brought Eddy's own bottle to him and Eddy had taken a long pull out of it and then asked Tom to put it in the bait box to keep it cool. "And handy," he added. "If I see Davy fight this fish much longer it will make a damned rummy out of me."

"I'll bring it any time you want it," Andrew said.

"Don't bring it when I want it," Eddy told him. "Bring it when I ask for it."

The oldest boy had come up with Thomas Hudson and together they watched Eddy bend over David and look carefully into his eyes. Roger was holding the chair and watching the line.

"Now listen, Davy," Eddy told the boy, looking close into his face. "Your hands and your feet don't mean a damn thing. They hurt and they look bad but they are all right. That's the way a fisherman's hands and feet are supposed to get and next time they'll be tougher. But is your bloody head all right?"

"Fine," David said. "Then God bless you and stay with the son of a bitch because we are going to have him up here soon."

"Davy," Roger spoke to the boy. "Do you want me to take him?"

David shook his head.

"It wouldn't be quitting now," Roger said. "It would just make sense. I could take him or your father could take him."

“Am I doing anything wrong?” David asked bitterly.

“No. You’re doing perfectly.”

“Then why should I quit on him?”

“He’s giving you an awful beating, Davy,” Roger said. “I don’t want him to hurt you.”

“He’s the one has the hook in his goddamn mouth,” David’s voice was unsteady. “He isn’t giving me a beating. I’m giving him a beating. The son of a bitch.”

“Say anything you want, Dave,” Roger told him. “The damn son of a bitch. The big son of a bitch.”

“He’s crying,” Andrew, who had come up topside and was standing with young Tom and his father, said. “He’s talking that way to get rid of it.”

“Shut up, horseman,” young Tom said.

“I don’t care if he kills me, the big son of a bitch,” David said. “Oh hell. I don’t hate him. I love him.”

“You shut up now,” Eddy said to David. “You save your wind.”

He looked at Roger and Roger lifted his shoulders to show he did not know.

“If I see you getting excited like that I’ll take him away from you,” Eddy said.

“I’m always excited,” David said. “Just because I never say it nobody knows. I’m no worse now. It’s only the talking.”

“Well you shut up now and take it easy,” Eddy said. “You stay calm and quiet and we’ll go with him forever.”

“I’ll stay with him,” David said. “I’m sorry I called him the names. I don’t want to say anything against him. I think he’s the finest thing in the world.”

“Andy, get me that bottle of pure alcohol,” Eddy said. “I’m going to loosen up his arms and shoulders and his legs,” he said to Roger. “I don’t want to use any more of that ice water for fear I’d cramp him up.”

He looked into the cabin and said, “Five and a half even, Roger.”

He turned to David, “You don’t feel too heated up now, do you, Davy?”

The boy shook his head.

“That straight-up-and-down sun in the middle of the day was what I was afraid of,” Eddy said. “Nothing going to happen to you now, Davy. Just take it easy and whip this old fish. We want to whip him before dark.”

David nodded.

“Papa, did you ever see a fish fight like this one?” young Tom asked.

“Yes,” Thomas Hudson told him.

“Very many?”

“I don’t know, Tommy. There are some terrible fish in this Gulf. Then there are huge big fish that are easy to catch.”

“Why are some easier?”

“I think because they get old and fat. Some I think are almost old enough to die. Then, of course, some of the biggest jump themselves to death.”

There had been no boats in sight for a long time and it was getting late in the afternoon and they were a long way out between the island and the great Isaacs light.

“Try him once more, Davy,” Roger said.

The boy bent his back, pulled back against his braced feet, and the rod, instead of staying solid, lifted slowly.

“You’ve got him coming,” Roger said. “Get that line on and try him again.”

The boy lifted and again recovered line.

“He’s coming up,” Roger told David. “Keep on him steady and good.”

David went to work like a machine, or like a very tired boy performing as a machine.

“This is the time,” Roger said. “He’s really coming up. Put her ahead just a touch, Tom. We want to take him on the port side if we

can."

"Ahead just a touch," Thomas Hudson said.

"Use your own judgment on it," Roger said. "We want to bring him up easy where Eddy can gaff him and we can get a noose over him. I'll handle the leader. Tommy, you come down here to handle the chair and see the line doesn't foul on the rod when I take the leader. Keep the line clear all the time in case I have to turn him loose. Andy, you help Eddy with anything he asks for and give him the noose and the club when he asks for them."

The fish was coming up steadily now and David was not breaking the rhythm of his pumping.

"Tom, you better come down and take the wheel below," Roger called up.

"I was just coming down," Thomas Hudson told him.

"Sorry," he said. "Davy, remember if he runs and I have to turn him loose keep your rod up and everything clear. Slack off your drag as soon as I take hold of the leader."

"Keep her spooled even," Eddy said. "Don't let her jam up now, Davy."

Thomas Hudson swung down from the flying bridge into the cockpit and took the wheel and the controls there. It was not as easy to see into the water as it was on the flying bridge but it was handier in case of any emergency and communication was easier. It was strange to be on the same level as the action after having looked down on it for so many hours, he thought. It was like moving down from a box seat onto the stage or to the ringside or close against the railing of the track. Everyone looked bigger and closer and they were all taller and not fore-shortened.

He could see David's bloody hands and lacquered-looking oozing feet and he saw the welts the harness had made across his back and the almost hopeless expression on his face as he turned his head at the last finish of a pull. He looked in the cabin and the brass clock showed that it was ten minutes to six. The sea looked different to

him now that he was so close to it, and looking at it from the shade and from David's bent rod, the white line slanted into the dark water and the rod lowered and rose steadily. Eddy knelt on the stern with the gaff in his sun-spotted freckled hands and looked down into the almost purple water trying to see the fish. Thomas Hudson noticed the rope hitches around the haft of the gaff and the rope made fast to the Samson post in the stern and then he looked again at David's back, his outstretched legs, and his long arms holding the rod.

"Can you see him, Eddy?" Roger asked from where he was holding the chair.

"Not yet. Stay on him, Davy, steady and good."

David kept on his same raising, lowering, and reeling; the reel heavy with line now; bringing in a sweep of line each time he swung it around.

Once the fish held steady for a moment and the rod doubled toward the water and line started to go out.

"No. He can't be," David said.

"He might," Eddy said. "You can't ever know."

But then David lifted slowly, suffering against the weight and, after the first slow lift, the line started to come again as easily and steadily as before.

"He just held for a minute," Eddy said. His old felt hat on the back of his head, he was peering down into the clear, dark purple water.

"There he is," he said.

Thomas Hudson slipped back quickly from the wheel to look over the stern. The fish showed, deep astern, looking tiny and foreshortened in the depth but in the small time Thomas Hudson looked at him he grew steadily in size. It was not as rapidly as a plane grows as it comes in toward you but it was as steady.

Thomas Hudson put his arm on David's shoulder and went back to the wheel. Then he heard Andrew say, "Oh look at him," and this

time he could see him from the wheel deep in the water and well astern, showing brown now and grown greatly in length and bulk.

"Keep her just as she is," Roger said without looking back and Thomas Hudson answered, "Just as she is."

"Oh God look at him," young Tom said.

Now he was really huge, bigger than any swordfish Thomas Hudson had ever seen. All the great length of him was purple blue now instead of brown and he was swimming slowly and steadily in the same direction the boat was going; astern of the boat and on David's right.

"Keep him coming all the time, Davy," Roger said. "He's coming in just right."

"Go ahead just a touch," Roger said, watching the fish.

"Ahead just a touch," Thomas Hudson answered.

"Keep it spooled," Eddy told David. Thomas Hudson could see the swivel of the leader now out of water.

"Ahead just a little more," Roger said.

"Going ahead just a little more," Thomas Hudson repeated.

He was watching the fish and easing the stern onto the course that he was swimming. He could see the whole great purple length of him now, the great broad sword forward, the slicing dorsal fin set in his wide shoulders, and his huge tail that drove him almost without a motion.

"Just a touch more ahead," Roger said.

"Going ahead a touch more."

David had the leader within reach now.

"Are you ready for him, Eddy?" Roger asked.

"Sure," Eddy said.

"Watch him, Tom," Roger said and leaned over and took hold of the cable leader.

"Slack off on your drag," he said to David and began slowly raising the fish, holding and lifting on the heavy cable to bring him within reach of the gaff.

The fish was coming up looking as long and as broad as a big log in the water. David was watching him and glancing up at his rod tip to make sure it was not fouled. For the first time in six hours he had no strain on his back and his arms and legs and Thomas Hudson saw the muscles in his legs twitching and quivering. Eddy was bending over the side with the gaff and Roger was lifting slowly and steadily.

"He'd go over a thousand," Eddy said. Then he said, very quietly, "Roger, hook's only holding by a thread."

"Can you reach him?" Roger asked.

"Not yet," Eddy said. "Keep him coming easy, easy."

Roger kept lifting on the wire cable and the great fish rose steadily toward the boat.

"It's been cutting," Eddy said. "It's just holding by nothing."

"Can you reach him now?" Roger asked. His tone had not changed.

"Not quite yet," Eddy said as quietly. Roger was lifting as gently and as softly as he could. Then, from lifting, he straightened, all strain gone, holding the slack leader in his two hands.

"No. No. No. Please God, no," young Tom said.

Eddy lunged down into the water with the gaff and then went overboard to try to get the gaff into the fish if he could reach him.

It was no good. The great fish hung there in the depth of water where he was like a huge dark purple bird and then settled slowly. They all watched him go down, getting smaller and smaller until he was out of sight.

Eddy's hat was floating on the calm sea and he was holding onto the gaff handle. The gaff was on the line that was fast to the Samson post in the stern. Roger put his arms around David and Thomas Hudson could see David's shoulders shaking. But he left David to Roger. "Get the ladder out for Eddy to come aboard," he said to young Tom. "Take Davy's rod, Andy. Unhook it."

Roger lifted the boy out of the chair and carried him over to the

bunk at the starboard side of the cockpit and laid him down in it. Roger's arms were around David and the boy lay flat on his face on the bunk.

Eddy came on board soaked and dripping, and started to undress. Andrew fished out his hat with the gaff and Thomas Hudson went below to get Eddy a shirt and a pair of dungarees and a shirt and shorts for David. He was surprised that he had no feeling at all except pity and love for David. All other feeling had been drained out of him in the fight.

When he came up David was lying, naked, face-down on the bunk and Roger was rubbing him down with alcohol.

"It hurts across the shoulders and my tail," David said. "Watch out, Mr. Davis, please."

"It's where it's chafed," Eddy told him. "Your father's going to fix your hands and feet with Mercurochrome. That won't hurt."

"Get this shirt on, Davy," Thomas Hudson said. "So you won't get cold. Go get one of the lightest blankets for him, Tom."

Thomas Hudson touched the places where the harness had chafed the boy's back with Mercurochrome and helped him into the shirt.

"I'm all right," David said in a toneless voice. "Can I have a Coke, papa?"

"Sure," Thomas Hudson told him. "Eddy will get you some soup in a little while."

"I'm not hungry," David said. "I couldn't eat yet."

"We'll wait a while," Thomas Hudson said.

"I know how you feel, Dave," Andrew said when he brought the Coke.

"Nobody knows how I feel," David said.

Thomas Hudson gave his oldest boy a compass course to steer back to the island.

"Synchronize your motors at three hundred, Tommy," he said. "We'll be in sight of the light by dark and then I'll give you a

correction."

"You check me every once in a while will you please, papa. Do you feel as awful as I do?"

"There's nothing to do about it."

"Eddy certainly tried," young Tom said. "Not everybody would jump in this ocean after a fish."

"Eddy nearly made it," his father told him. "It could have been a hell of a thing with him in the water with a gaff in that fish."

"Eddy would have got out all right," young Tom said. "Are they synchronized all right?"

"Listen for it," his father told him. "Don't just watch the tachometers. "

Thomas Hudson went over to the bunk and sat down by David. He was rolled up in the light blanket and Eddy was fixing his hands and Roger his feet.

"Hi, papa," he said and looked at Thomas Hudson and then looked away.

"I'm awfully sorry, Davy," his father said. "You made the best fight on him I ever saw anyone make. Roger or any man ever."

"Thank you very much, papa. Please don't talk about it."

"Can I get you anything, Davy?"

"I'd like another Coke, please," David said.

Thomas Hudson found a cold bottle of Coca-Cola in the ice of the bait box and opened it. He sat by David and the boy drank the Coke with the hand Eddy had fixed.

"I'll have some soup ready right away. It's heating now," Eddy said. "Should I heat some chile, Tom? We've got some conch salad."

"Let's heat some chili," Thomas Hudson said. "We haven't eaten since breakfast. Roger hasn't had a drink all day."

"I had a bottle of beer just now," Roger said.

"Eddy," David said. "What would he really weigh?"

"Over a thousand," Eddy told him.

"Thank you very much for going overboard," David said. "Thank

you very much, Eddy."

"Hell," Eddy said. "What else was there to do?"

"Would he really have weighed a thousand, papa?" David asked.

"I'm sure of it," Thomas Hudson answered. "I've never seen a bigger fish, either broadbill or marlin, ever."

The sun had gone down and the boat was driving through the calm sea, the boat alive with the engines, pushing fast through the same water they had moved so slowly through for all those hours.

Andrew was sitting on the edge of the wide bunk now, too.

"Hello, horseman," David said to him.

"If you'd have caught him," Andrew said, "you'd have been probably the most famous young boy in the world."

"I don't want to be famous," David said. "You can be famous."

"We'd have been famous as your brothers," Andrew said. "I mean really."

"I'd have been famous as your friend," Roger told him.

"I'd have been famous because I steered," Thomas Hudson said. "And Eddy because he gaffed him."

"Eddy ought to be famous anyway," Andrew said. "Tommy would be famous because he brought so many drinks. All through the terrific battle Tommy kept them supplied."

"What about the fish? Wouldn't he be famous?" David asked.

He was all right, now. Or, at least, he was talking all right.

"He'd be the most famous of all," Andrew said. "He'd be immortal."

"I hope nothing happened to him," David said. "I hope he's all right."

"I know he's all right," Roger told him. "The way he was hooked and the way he fought I know he was all right."

"I'll tell you sometime how it was," David said.

"Tell now," Andy urged him.

"I'm tired now and besides it sounds crazy."

"Tell now. Tell a little bit," Andrew said.

“I don’t know whether I better. Should I, papa?”

“Go ahead,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Well,” David said with his eyes tight shut. “In the worst parts, when I was the tiredest I couldn’t tell which was him and which was me.”

“I understand,” Roger said.

“Then I began to love him more than anything on earth.”

“You mean really love him?” Andrew asked.

“Yeah. Really love him.”

“Gee,” said Andrew. “I can’t understand that.”

“I loved him so much when I saw him coming up that I couldn’t stand it,” David said, his eyes still shut. “All I wanted was to see him closer.”

“I know,” Roger said.

“Now I don’t give a shit I lost him,” David said. “I don’t care about records. I just thought I did. I’m glad that he’s all right and that I’m all right. We aren’t enemies.”

“I’m glad you told us,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Thank you very much, Mr. Davis, for what you said when I first lost him,” David said with his eyes still shut.

Thomas Hudson never knew what it was that Roger had said to him.

X

That night in the heavy calm before the wind rose Thomas Hudson sat in his chair and tried to read. The others were all in bed but he knew he could not sleep and he wanted to read until he was sleepy. He could not read and he thought about the day. He thought about it from the beginning until the end and it seemed as though all of his children except Tom had gone a long way away from him or he had gone away from them.

David had gone with Roger. He wanted David to get everything he could from Roger, who was as beautiful and sound in action as he was unbeautiful and unsound in his life and in his work. David was always a mystery to Thomas Hudson. He was a well-loved mystery. But Roger understood him better than his own father did. He was happy they did understand each other so well but tonight he felt lonely in some way about it.

Then he had not liked the way Andrew had behaved, although he knew Andrew was Andrew and a little boy and that it was unfair to judge him. He had done nothing bad and he had really behaved very well. But there was something about him that you could not trust.

What a miserable, selfish way to be thinking about people that you love, he thought. Why don't you remember the day and not analyze it and tear it to pieces? Go to bed now, he told himself, and make yourself sleep. The hell with anything else. And pick up the rhythm of your life in the morning. You don't have the boys for much longer. See how happy a time you can make for them. I've tried, he said to himself. I've tried truly and for Roger, too. And you

have been very happy yourself, he told himself. Yes, of course. But something about today frightened me. Then he told himself: truly, there is something about every day to frighten you. Go on to bed and maybe you'll sleep well. Remember you want them to be happy tomorrow.

A big southwest wind came up in the night and by daylight it was slowing with almost the force of a gale. The palms were bent with it and shutters slammed and papers blew and a surf was piling on the beach.

Roger was gone when Thomas Hudson came down to breakfast alone. The boys were still sleeping and he read his mail that had come from the mainland on the run-boat that brought ice, meat, fresh vegetables, gas, and other supplies once a week. It was blowing so hard he put a coffee cup on a letter to hold it when he laid it down on the table.

"Want me to shut the doors?" Joseph asked.

"No. Only if things start to break."

"Mr. Roger gone walking on the beach," Joseph said. "Headed up toward the end of the island."

Thomas Hudson kept on reading his mail.

"Here's the paper," Joseph said. "I ironed her out."

"Thank you, Joseph."

"Mister Tom, is it true about the fish? What Eddy was telling me?"

"What did he say?"

"About how big he was and having him right up to the gaff."

"It's true."

"God Almighty. If that run-boat hadn't come so I had to stay in to carry ice and groceries I'd have been along. I'd have dove right in after him and gaffed him."

"Eddy dove in," Thomas Hudson said.

"He didn't tell me," Joseph said, subdued.

"I'd like some more coffee, please, Joseph, and another piece of

papaw," Thomas Hudson said. He was hungry and the wind gave him even more appetite. "Didn't the run-boat bring any bacon?"

"I believe I can find some," Joseph said. "You're eating good this morning."

"Ask Eddy to come in please."

"Eddy went home to fix his eye."

"What happened to his eye?"

"Somebody balled their fist in it."

Thomas Hudson believed he knew why this might have happened.

"Is he hurt anywhere else?"

"He's beat pretty bad," Joseph said. "On account of people not believing him in different bars. People ain't never going to believe him that story he tells. Certainly is a pity."

"Where'd he fight?"

"Everywhere. Everywhere where they wouldn't believe him. Nobody believe him yet. People took to not believing him late at night that didn't know what it was about even just to get him to fight. He must have fought all the fighting men on the island. Tonight, sure as you eating breakfast, men'll come up from Middle Key just to doubt his word. Couple real bad fighting men down at Middle Key now on that construction."

"Mr. Roger better go out with him," Thomas Hudson said.

"Oh boy," Joseph's face lighted up. "Tonight's the night we got fun."

Thomas Hudson drank the coffee and ate the cold papaw with fresh lime squeezed over it and four more strips of bacon that Joseph brought in.

"I see you were in an eating mood," Joseph said. "When I see you like that, I want to make something out of it."

"I eat plenty."

"Sometimes," Joseph said.

He came in with another cup of coffee and Thomas Hudson took

it up to his desk to answer the two letters he needed to get off in the mail boat.

"Go up to Eddy's house and get him to make out the list of what we need to order by the run-boat," he said to Joseph. "Then bring it to me to check. Is there coffee for Mr. Roger?"

"He had his," Joseph said.

Thomas Hudson finished the two letters at the work desk upstairs and Eddy came over with the list of supplies for the next week's run-boat. Eddy looked bad enough. His eye had not responded to treatment and his mouth and cheeks were swollen. One ear was swollen, too. He had put Mercurochrome on his mouth where it was cut and the bright color made him look very untragic.

"I didn't do any good last night," he said. "I think everything is on here, Tom."

"Why don't you layoff today and go home and take it easy?"

"I feel worse at home," he said.

"I'll go to bed early tonight."

"Don't get in any more fights about that," Thomas Hudson said. "It doesn't do any good."

"You're talking to the right man," Eddy said through the scarlet of his split and swollen lips. "I kept waiting for truth and right to win and then somebody new would knock truth and right right on its ass."

"Joseph said you had a lot of them."

"Till somebody took me home," Eddy said. "Big-hearted Benny I guess it was. He and Constable probably saved me from getting hurt."

"You aren't hurt?"

"I hurt but I ain't hurt. Hell, you ought to have been there, Tom."

"I'm glad I wasn't. Did anybody try to really hurt you?"

"I don't think so. They were just proving to me I was wrong. Constable believed me."

"Did he?"

"Yes sir. Him and Bobby. Only people believed me, all right. Constable said any man who hit me first he'd lock him up. Asked me this morning if there was anybody hit me first. I told him yes but I hit *at* them first. It was a bad night for truth and right, Tom. Bad night all right."

"Do you really want to cook lunch?"

"Why not?" Eddy said. "We've got steaks on the run-boat. Real sirloin steak. You ought to see her. I figured to have it with mashed potatoes and gravy and some lima beans. We got that cabbage lettuce and fresh grapefruit for a salad. The boys would like a pie and we got canned loganberries makes a hell of a pie. We got ice cream from the run-boat to put on top of it. How's that? I want to feed that goddamn David up."

"What did you figure to do when you dove overboard with the gaff?"

"I was going to get the gaff hook into him right underneath his fin where it would kill him when he came taut on the rope and then get the hell away from there and back on board."

"What did he look like underwater?"

"He was as wide as a dinghy, Tom. All purple and his eye looked as big as your hand is long. It was black and he was silver underneath and his sword was terrible to see. He just kept on going down, settling slow, and I couldn't get down to him because that big haft on the gaff was too buoyant. I couldn't sink with it. So it wasn't any use."

"Did he look at you?"

"I couldn't tell. He just looked like he was there and nothing made any difference to him."

"Do you think he was tired?"

"I think he was through. I think he'd decided to give up."

"We'll never see anything like that again."

"No. Not in our lifetimes. And I know enough now not to try to

make people believe it."

"I'm going to paint a picture of it for David."

"You make it just like it was then. Don't make it comic like some of those comic ones you paint."

"I'm going to paint it truer than a photograph."

"That's the way I like it when you paint."

"It's going to be awfully hard to paint the underwater part."

"Will it be like that waterspout picture down at Bobby's?"

"No. This will be different but I hope it will be better. I'm going to make sketches for it today."

"I like that waterspout picture," Eddy said. "Bobby, he's crazy about it and he can make anybody believe there was that many waterspouts that time when they see the picture. But this will be a hell of a one to paint with the fish in the water."

"I think I can do it," Thomas Hudson said.

"You couldn't paint him jumping, too, could you?"

"I think I can."

"Paint him the two of them, Tom. Paint him jumping and then with Roger bringing him up on the leader and Davy in the chair and me on the stern. We can get photographs took of it."

"I'll start the sketches."

"Anything you want to ask me," Eddy said. "I'll be in the kitchen. The boys still asleep?"

"All three of them."

"Hell," Eddy said. "I don't give a damn about anything since that fish. But we've got to have a good meal."

"I wish I had a leech for that eye."

"Hell, I don't give a damn about the eye. I can see out of it fine."

"I'm going to let the boys sleep as long as they can."

"Joe, he'll tell me when they're up and I'll give them breakfast. If they wake up too late, I won't give them too much so as not to spoil lunch. You didn't see that piece of meat we got?"

"No."

“Goddam she sure costs money but it’s beautiful meat, Tom. Nobody on this island has eaten meat like that in their whole lives. I wonder what those beef cattle look like that meat comes from.”

“They’re built right down close to the ground,” Thomas Hudson said. “And they’re almost as wide as they are long.”

“God, they must be fat,” Eddy said. “I’d like to see them alive sometime. Here nobody ever butchers a cow till just before it’s going to die from starving. The meat’s bitter. People here’d go crazy with meat like that we got. They wouldn’t know what it was. Probably make them sick.”

“I have to finish these letters,” Thomas Hudson said.

“I’m sorry, Tom.”

After he finished the mail, answering two other business letters that he had intended to put off until the next week’s boat, checking the list for the next week’s needs and writing a check for the week’s supplies plus the flat ten percent the government charged on all imports from the Mainland, Thomas Hudson walked down to the run-boat that was loading at the government wharf. The captain was taking orders from the islanders for supplies, dry goods, medicines, hardware, spare parts, and all the things that came into the island from the Mainland. The run-boat was loading live crawfish and conches and a deck load of conch shells and empty gasoline and Diesel oil drums and the islanders stood in line in the heavy wind waiting their turn in the cabin.

“Was everything all right, Tom?” Captain Ralph called out the cabin window to Thomas Hudson.

“Hey, get back out of this cabin, you boy, and come in your turn,” he said to a big Negro in a straw hat. “I had to substitute on a few things. How was the meat?”

“Eddy says it’s wonderful.”

“Good. Let me have those letters and the list. Blowing a gale outside. I want to get out over the bar on this next tide. Sorry I’m so busy.”

“See you next week, Ralph. Don’t let me hold you up. Thanks very much, boy.”

“I’ll try to have everything next week. Need any money?”

“No. I’m all right from last week.”

“Got plenty of it here if you want it. OK. Now, you, Lucius, what’s your trouble? What you spending money on now?”

Thomas Hudson walked back along the dock where the Negroes were laughing at what the wind was doing to the girls’ and the women’s cotton dresses and then up the coral road to the Ponce de León.

“Tom,” Mr. Bobby said. “Come in and sit down. By God where’ve you been? We’re just swept out and she’s officially open. Come on and have the best one of the day.”

“It’s pretty early.”

“Nonsense. That’s good imported beer. We got Dog’s Head ale too.” He reached into a tub of ice, opened a bottle of Pilsner, and handed it to Thomas Hudson. “You don’t want a glass, do you? Put that down and then decide if you want a drink or not.”

“I won’t work then.”

“Who gives a damn? You work too much as it is. You got a duty to yourself, Tom. Your one and only life. You can’t just paint all the time.”

“We were in the boat yesterday and I didn’t work.” Thomas Hudson was looking at the big canvas of the waterspouts that hung on the wall at the end of the bar. It was a good painting, Thomas Hudson thought. As good as he could do as of today, he thought.

“I got to hang her higher,” Bobby said. “Some gentleman got excited last night and tried to climb into the skiff. I told him it would cost him ten thousand dollars if he put his foot through her. Constable told him the same. Constable’s got an idea for one he wants you to paint to hang in his home.”

“What is it?”

“Constable wouldn’t say. Just that he had a very valuable idea

he had intention to discuss with you."

Thomas Hudson was looking at the canvas closely. It showed certain signs of wear.

"By God, she sure stands up," Bobby said proudly. "The other night a gentleman let out a shout and threw a full mug of beer at the column of one of the waterspouts trying to break it down. You wouldn't have known she'd ever been hit. Never dented her. Beer run off her like water. By God, Tom, you sure painted her solid."

"She'll only take about so much though."

"By God," said Bobby. "I ain't seen nothing faze her yet. But I'm going to hang her higher just the same. That gentleman last night worried me."

He handed Thomas Hudson another bottle of the ice-cold Pilsner.

"Tom, I want to tell you how sorry I am about the fish. I know Eddy since we were boys and I never heard him lie. About anything important, I mean. I mean if you asked him to tell you something true."

"It was a hell of a thing. I'm not going to tell anybody about it."

"That's the right way," Bobby said. "I just wanted you to know how sorry I was. Why don't you finish that beer and have a drink? We don't want to start feeling sad this early. What would make you feel good?"

"I feel good enough. I'm going to work this afternoon and I don't want to get logy."

"Oh well, if I can't break you out maybe somebody will come in that I can. Look at that damn yacht. She must have taken a beating coming across with that shallow draft."

Thomas Hudson looked out the open door and saw the handsome, white, houseboat type craft coming up the channel. She was one of the type that chartered out of a Mainland port to go down through the Florida Keys and on a day such as yesterday, calm and flat, she could have crossed the Gulf Stream without

incident. But today she must have taken a beating with her shallow draft and so much superstructure. Thomas Hudson wondered that she had been able to come in over the bar with the sea that was running.

The houseboat ran up the harbor a little further to anchor and Thomas Hudson and Bobby watched her from the doorway, all white and brass and everyone that showed on her in whites.

"Customers," Mr. Bobby said. "Hope they're nice people. We haven't had a full-sized yacht in here since the tuna run was over."

"Who is she?"

"I never seen her before. Pretty boat, all right. Certainly not built for the Gulf, though."

"She probably left at midnight when it was calm and this hit her on the way over."

"That's about it," Bobby said. "Must have been some rolling and some crashing. It's really blowing. Well, we'll see who they are shortly. Tom, let me make you something, boy. You make me nervous not drinking."

"All right. I'll have a gin and tonic."

"No tonic water. Joe took the last case up to the house."

"A whisky sour then."

"With Irish whisky and no sugar," Bobby said. "Three of them. Here comes Roger." Thomas Hudson saw him through the open door.

Roger came in. He was barefooted, wore a faded pair of dungarees, and an old striped fisherman's shirt that was shrunken from washings. You could see the back muscles move under it as he leaned forward and put his arms on the bar. In the dim light of Bobby's, his skin showed very dark and his hair was salt-and sun-streaked.

"They're still sleeping," he said to Thomas Hudson. "Somebody beat up Eddy. Did you see?"

"He was having fights all last night," Bobby told him. "They

didn't amount to anything."

"I don't like things to happen to Eddy," Roger said.

"Wasn't anything bad, Roger," Bobby assured him. "He was drinking and fighting people who wouldn't believe him. Nobody did anything wrong to him."

"I feel bad about David," Roger said to Thomas Hudson.

"We shouldn't have ever let him do it."

"He's probably all right," Thomas Hudson said. "He was sleeping well. But it was my responsibility. I was the one to call it off."

"No. You trusted me."

"The father has the responsibility," Thomas Hudson said. "And I turned it over to you when I had no right to. It isn't anything to delegate."

"But I took it," Roger said. "I didn't think it was harming him. Neither did Eddy."

"I know," Thomas Hudson said. "I didn't think it was either. I thought something else was at stake."

"So did I," Roger said. "But now I feel selfish and guilty as hell."

"I'm his father," Thomas Hudson said. "It was my fault."

"Damn bad thing about that fish," Bobby said, handing them the whisky sours and taking one himself. "Let's drink to a bigger one."

"No," Roger said. "I don't want to ever see a bigger one."

"What's the matter with you, Roger?" Bobby asked.

"Nothing," Roger said.

"I'm going to paint a couple of pictures of him for David."

"That's wonderful. Do you think you can get it?"

"With luck, maybe. I can see it and I think I know how to do it."

"You can do it all right. You can do anything. I wonder who's on the yacht?"

"Look, Roger, you've been walking your remorse all over the island—"

"Barefooted," he said.

"I just brought mine down here by way of Captain Ralph's run-

boat."

"I couldn't walk mine out and I'm certainly not going to try to drink it out," Roger said. "This is a mighty nice drink though, Bobby."

"Yes sir," Bobby said. "I'll make you another one. Get that old remorse on the run."

"I had no business gambling with a kid," Roger said. "Somebody else's boy."

"It depends on what you were gambling for."

"No, it doesn't. You shouldn't gamble with kids."

"I know. I know what I was gambling for. It wasn't a fish, either."

"Sure," Roger said. "But it was the one you didn't need to do it to. The one you didn't need to ever let anything like that happen to."

"He'll be fine when he wakes up. You'll see. He's a very intact boy."

"He's my goddamnned hero," Roger said.

"That's a damned sight better than when you used to be your own goddamnned hero."

"Isn't it?" Roger said. "He's yours, too."

"I know it," Thomas Hudson said. "He's good for both of us."

"Roger," Mr. Bobby said. "Are you and Tom any sort of kin?"

"Why?"

"I thought you were. You don't look too different."

"Thanks," Thomas Hudson said. "Thank him yourself, Roger."

"Thank you very much, Bobby," Roger said. "Do you really think I look like this combination man and painter?"

"You look like quarter brothers and the boys look like both of you."

"We're no kin," Thomas Hudson said. "We just used to live in the same town and make some of the same mistakes."

"Well, the hell with it," Mister Bobby said. "Drink up and quit

all this remorse talk. It don't sound good this time of day in a bar. I got remorse from Negroes, mates on charter boats, cooks off yachts, millionaires and their wives, big rum runners, grocery store people, one-eyed men off turtle boats, sons of bitches, anybody. Don't let's have no morning remorse. A big wind is the time to drink. We're through with remorse. That remorse is old stuff anyway. Since they got the radio everybody just listens to the BBC. There ain't no time and no room for remorse."

"Do you listen to it, Bobby?"

"Just to Big Ben. The rest of it makes me restless."

"Bobby," Roger said. "You're a great and good man."

"Neither. But I'm certainly pleased to see you looking more cheerful."

"I am," said Roger. "What sort of people do you think we'll get off that yacht?"

"Customers," said Bobby. "Let's drink one more so I'll feel like serving them, however they are."

While Bobby was squeezing the limes and making the drinks Roger said to Thomas Hudson, "I didn't mean to be wet about Davy."

"You weren't."

"What I meant was. Oh hell, I'll try to work it out simply. That was a sound crack you made about when I was my own hero."

"I've got no business making cracks."

"You have as far as I'm concerned. The trouble is there hasn't been anything in life that was simple for such a damn long time and I try to make it simple all the time."

"You're going to write straight and simple and good now. That's the start."

"What if I'm not straight and simple and good? Do you think I can write that way?"

"Write how you are but make it straight."

"I've got to try to understand it better, Tom."

“You are. Remember last time I saw you before this summer was in New York with that cigarette-butt bitch.”

“She killed herself,” Roger said.

“When?”

“While I was up in the hills. Before I went on to the Coast and wrote that picture.”

“I’m sorry,” Thomas Hudson said.

“She was headed for it all the time,” Roger said. “I‘m glad I stepped out in time.”

“You wouldn’t ever do that.”

“I don’t know,” Roger said. “I’ve seen it look very logical.”

“One reason you wouldn’t do it is because it would be a hell of an example for the boys. How would Dave feel?”

“He’d probably understand. Anyway when you get into that business that far you don’t think much about examples.”

“Now you are talking wet.”

Bobby pushed over the drinks. “Roger, you talk that kind of stuff you get even me depressed. I’m paid to listen to anything people say. But I don’t want to hear my friends talk that way. Roger, you stop it.”

“I’ve stopped it.”

“Good,” Bobby said. “Drink up. We had a gentleman here from New York lived down at the Inn and he used to come here and drink most of the day. All he used to talk about was how he was going to kill himself. Made everybody nervous half the winter. Constable warned him it was an illegal act. I tried to get Constable to warn him that talking about it was an illegal act. But Constable said he’d have to get an opinion on that from Nassau. After a while people sort of got used to his project and then a lot of the drinkers started siding with him. Especially one day he was talking to Big Harry and he told Big Harry he was thinking of killing himself and he wanted to take somebody with him.

“‘I’m your man,’ Big Harry told him. ‘I’m who you’ve been

looking for.' So then Big Harry tries to encourage him that they should go to New York City and really pitch one and stay drunk until they couldn't stand it and then jump off of the highest part of the city straight into oblivion. I think Big Harry figured oblivion was some sort of a suburb. Probably an Irish neighborhood.

"Well, the suicide gentleman took kindly to this idea and they'd talk it over every day. Others tried to get in on it and proposed they form an excursion of death seekers and just go as far as Nassau for the preliminaries. But Big Harry, he held out for New York City and finally he confided to the suicide gentleman that he couldn't stand this life no longer and he was ready to go.

"Big Harry, he had to go out for a couple days crawfishing on a order he had from Captain Ralph and while he was gone the suicide gentleman took to drinking too much. Then he'd take some kind of ammonia from up north that would seem to sober him up and he'd come down to drink here again. But it was accumulating in him some way.

"We all called him Suicides by then so I said to him, 'Suicides, you better layoff or you'll never live to reach oblivion.' 'I'm bound for it now,' he says. 'I'm en route. I'm headed for it. Take the money for these drinks. I've made my dread decision.'

"'Here's your change,' I said to him.

"'I don't want no change. Keep it for Big Harry so he can have a drink before he joins me.'

"So he goes out in a rush and he dives off of Johnny Black's dock into the channel with the tide going out and it's dark and no moon and nobody sees him any more until he washes up on the point in two days. Everybody looked for him good that night, too. I figured he must have struck his head on some old concrete and went out with the tide. Big Harry come in and he mourned him until the change was all drunk up. It was change from a twenty-dollar bill too. Then Big Harry said to me, 'You know, Bobby, I think old Suicides was crazy.' He was right, too, because when his

family sent for him the man who came explained to Commissioner old Suicides had suffered from a thing called Mechanic's Depressive. You never had that, did you, Roger?"

"No," said Roger. "And now I think I never will."

"That's the stuff," Mr. Bobby said. "And don't you ever fool with that old oblivion stuff."

"Fuck oblivion," said Roger.

XI

Lunch was excellent. The steak was browned outside and striped by the grill. A knife slipped through the outer part and inside the meat was tender and juicy. They all dipped up juice from their plates and put it on the mashed potatoes and the juice made a lake in their creamy whiteness. The lima beans, cooked in butter, were firm; the cabbage lettuce was crisp and cold and the grapefruit was chilly cold.

Everyone was hungry with the wind and Eddy came up and looked in while they were eating. His face looked very bad and he said, "What the hell you think of meat like that?"

"It's wonderful," young Tom said.

"Chew it good," Eddy said. "Don't waste that eating it fast."

"You can't chew it much or it's gone," young Tom told him.

"Have we got dessert, Eddy?" David asked.

"Sure. Pie and ice cream."

"Oh boy," Andrew said. "Two pieces?"

"Enough to founder you. Ice cream's as hard as a rock."

"What kind of pie?"

"Loganberry pie."

"What kind of ice cream?"

"Coconut."

"Where'd we get it?"

"Run-boat brought it."

They drank iced tea with the meal and Roger and Thomas Hudson had coffee after the dessert.

"Eddy's a wonderful cook," Roger said.

“Some of it’s appetite.”

“That steak wasn’t appetite. Nor that salad. Nor that pie.”

“He is a fine cook,” Thomas Hudson agreed. “Is the coffee all right?”

“Excellent.”

“Papa,” young Tom asked, “if the people on the yacht go to Mr. Bobby’s can we go down and practice Andy being a rummy on them?”

“Mr. Bobby might not like it. He might get in bad with Constable.”

“I’ll go down and tell Mr. Bobby and I’ll speak to Constable. He’s a friend of ours.”

“All right. You tell Mr. Bobby and keep a look out for when the yacht people show up. What will we do about Dave?”

“Can’t we carry him? He’d look good that way.”

“I’ll put on Tom’s sneakers and walk,” David said. “Have you got it worked out, Tommy?”

“We can make it up as we go along,” young Tom said. “Can you still turn your eyelids inside out?”

“Oh sure,” said David.

“Don’t do it now, please,” Andrew said. “I don’t want to be sick right after lunch.”

“For a dime I’d make you throw up now, horseman.”

“No please don’t. Later on I won’t mind.”

“Do you want me to go with you?” Roger asked young Tom.

“I’d love it,” young Tom said. “We can work it out together.”

“Let’s go then,” Roger said. “Why don’t you take a nap, Davy?”

“I might,” said David. “I’ll read till I go to sleep. What are you going to do, papa?”

“I’m going to work in the lee out on the porch.”

“I’ll lie out there on the cot and watch you work. Will you mind?”

“No. Make me work better.”

"We'll be back," Roger said. "What about you, Andy?"

"I'd like to come and study it. But I think I better not because the people might be there."

"That's smart," young Tom said. "You're smart, horseman."

They went off and Thomas Hudson worked all afternoon.

Andy watched for a while and then went out somewhere and David watched and read and did not talk.

Thomas Hudson wanted to paint the leap of the fish first because painting him in the water was going to be much more difficult and he made two sketches, neither of which he liked, and finally a third one that he did like.

"Do you think that gets it, Davy?"

"Gee, papa, it looks wonderful. But water comes up with him when he comes out, doesn't it? I mean not just when he splashed back."

"It must," his father agreed. "Because he has to burst the surface."

"He came up so long. A lot must have come up. I suppose it really drips off him or pours off him if you could see it fast enough. Is he on his way up or on his way down?"

"This is just the sketch. I thought of him as just at the top."

"I know it's just the sketch, papa. You forgive me if I butt in. I don't mean to act as though I knew."

"I like you to tell me."

"You know who'd know would be Eddy. He sees faster than a camera and he remembers. Don't you think Eddy is a great man?"

"Of course he is."

"Practically nobody knows about Eddy. Tommy does, of course. I like Eddy better than anybody except you and Mr. Davis. He cooks just like he loved it and he knows so much and can do anything. Look what he did with the shark and look how he went overboard yesterday after the fish."

"And last night people beating him up because they didn't

believe him."

"But, papa, Eddy isn't tragic."

"No. He's happy."

"Even today after he was all beaten up he was happy. And I'm sure he was happy that he went in after him."

"Of course."

"I wish Mr. Davis was happy the way Eddy is."

"Mr. Davis is more complicated than Eddy."

"I know it. But I can remember when he used to be careless happy. I know Mr. Davis very well, papa."

"He's pretty happy now. I know he's lost the carelessness though."

"I didn't mean a bad carelessness."

"I didn't, either. But there is some sort of a sureness that he's lost."

"I know it," David said.

"I wish he'd find it. Maybe he'll find it when he writes again. You see Eddy's happy because he does something well and does it every day."

"I guess Mr. Davis can't do his every day the way you do and Eddy does."

"No. And there are other things."

"I know. I know too much for a kid, papa. Tommy knows twenty times as much as I do and knows the damndest things and they don't hurt him. But everything I know hurts me. I don't know why it should, either."

"You mean that you feel it."

"I feel it and it does something to me. It's like a vicarious sin. If there is any such thing."

"I see."

"Papa, you excuse me for talking seriously. I know it isn't polite. But I like to sometimes because there is so much we don't know and then when we do know, it comes so fast it goes over you like a

wave. The way the waves are today."

"You can always ask me anything, Davy."

"I know. Thank you very much. I'll wait, I guess, on some things. There's some I guess you can only learn for yourself probably."

"Do you think we better do this 'rummy' business with Tom and Andy at Bobby's? Remember I got in trouble about the man saying you were always drunk."

"I remember—when he'd seen me drunk on wine twice in three years—but let's not talk about it. This at Mr. Bobby's will be a good alibi in case I ever did drink. If I did it twice with that man I might do it three times. No, I think this is a good thing to do, papa."

"Have you done it lately, the pretend-rummy scene?"

"Tom and I do some pretty good ones. But with Andy they're much better. Andy's sort of a genius on them. He can do horrible ones. Mine are sort of special."

"What have you done lately?" Thomas Hudson went on drawing.

"Did you ever see me do the idiot brother? The mongolian idiot?"

"Never."

"How do you like it now, Davy?" Thomas Hudson showed him the sketch.

"It's fine," David said. "Now I see what you were after. It's when he hangs in the air just before he falls. Can I really have the painting, papa?"

"Sure."

"I'll take care of it."

"There'll be two."

"I'll only take one to school and I'll keep one at home at mother's. Or would you rather keep it here?"

"No. She might like it. Tell me about some others that you did," Thomas Hudson said.

"We used to have some awful ones on trains. Trains are the best

because of the sort of people I guess. You don't get those sort of people concentrated almost anywhere except on trains. And then they can't get away."

Thomas Hudson heard Roger talking in the other room and started to clean up and put away his gear. Young Tom came in and said, "How are you, papa? Did you work well? May I see it?"

Thomas Hudson showed him the two sketches and he said, "I like them both."

"Do you like one better than the other?" David asked him.

"No. They're both fine," he said. Thomas Hudson could see he was in a hurry and that his mind was on something.

"How is it coming?" David asked him.

"It's terrific," young Tom said. "It will be wonderful if we do it right. They're all down there now and we've been working on them all afternoon. We saw Mr. Bobby and Constable before they came. The way it's been so far is that Mr. Davis is sodden and I've been trying to dissuade him."

"You didn't overdo it?"

"Hell no," young Tom said. "You ought to have seen Mr. Davis. Every drink made a difference in him. But only imperceptibly."

"What was he drinking?"

"Tea. Bobby's got it in a rum bottle. He's got a gin bottle fixed with water for Andy."

"How did you try to dissuade Mr. Davis?"

"I pled with him. But so they couldn't hear me. Mr. Bobby's in it, too, but he's using real liquor."

"We better get down there," David said. "Before Mr. Bobby gets too far ahead. How's Mr. Davis feeling?"

"Wonderful. He's a great, great artist, Dave."

"Where's Andy?"

"Downstairs practicing part of it in front of a mirror."

"Is Eddy going to be in it?"

"Eddy and Joseph are both going to be in it."

"They'll never remember."

"They only have one line."

"Eddy can remember one line but I don't know about Joseph."

"He just repeats it after Eddy."

"Is Constable in it?"

"Sure."

"How many of *them* are there?"

"Seven with two girls. One nice-looking and one wonderful. She's sorry for Mr. Davis already."

"Oh boy," said David. "Let's go."

"How're you going to get down there?" young Tom asked David.

"I'll carry him," Thomas Hudson said.

"Please, papa, let me wear sneakers," David said. "Let me wear Tommy's sneakers. I'll walk on the side of my feet and it won't hurt them and it will look good."

"All right. We might as well go. Where's Roger?"

"He's having a quick one with Eddy for his art," young Tom said. "He was at bat a long time on that tea, papa."

The wind was still blowing hard outside when they went into the Ponce de León. The people from the yacht were at the bar drinking rum swizzles. They were a nice-looking lot of people, tanned and dressed in whites, and they were polite and made room at the bar. Two men and a girl were at one end where the slot machine was and three men and the other girl were at the other end nearest the door. It was the lovely-looking girl who was at the slot machine end. But the other girl was awfully nice-looking, too. Roger, Thomas Hudson, and the boys came in straight. David even tried not to limp.

Mr. Bobby looked at Roger and said, "You back?"

Roger nodded hopelessly and Bobby put the rum bottle and a glass on the bar in front of him.

Roger reached for it and didn't say anything.

"You drinking, Hudson?" Bobby said to Thomas Hudson. His

face was stern and righteous. Thomas Hudson nodded. “You ought to cut it out,” Bobby said. “There’s a goddamn limit to everything.”

“I just want a little rum, Bobby.”

“That stuff he’s drinking?”

“No. Bacardi.”

Mr. Bobby poured a glass and handed it to Thomas Hudson. “Take it,” he said. “Though you know I shouldn’t serve you.”

Thomas Hudson drank the glass at a gulp and it was warming and inspiring.

“Give me another,” Thomas Hudson said.

“In twenty minutes, Hudson,” Bobby said. He looked at the clock behind the bar.

By now the people were paying a little attention, but politely.

“What are you drinking, Sport?” Mr. Bobby asked David.

“You know damn well I’m off the stuff,” David said to him severely.

“Since when?”

“Since last night you know damn well.”

“Excuse me,” Mr. Bobby said. He took a quick one himself. “How the hell am I to keep track of you goddamn delinquents? All I ask is you get that Hudson out of here when I’ve got decent trade.”

“I’m drinking quietly,” Thomas Hudson said.

“You better.” Mr. Bobby corked the bottle in front of Roger and put it back on the shelf.

Young Tom nodded to him approvingly and whispered to Roger. Roger lowered his head on his hands. Then he raised his head and pointed to the bottle. Young Tom shook his head. Bobby picked up the bottle, uncorked it, and set it down in front of Roger.

“Drink yourself to death,” he said. “I won’t lose any sleep.” By now the two groups were watching this pretty closely; but still politely. They were slumming all right but they were polite and they seemed nice people.

Then Roger spoke for the first time.

Give the little rat a drink," he said to Bobby.

"What will you have, son?" Mr. Bobby asked Andy.

"Gin," Andy said.

Thomas Hudson was careful not to watch the people. But he could feel them.

Bobby put the bottle in front of Andy and set a glass by it. Andy poured the glass full and lifted it to Bobby.

"Here's to you, Mr. Bobby," he said. "The first one all day."

"Drink up," said Bobby. "You come in late."

"Papa had his money," David said. "His birthday money from mother."

Young Tom looked up in his father's face and started to cry. He kept himself from actually crying but it was sad to see and it was not overdone.

Nobody spoke until Andy said, "I'd like another gin, please, Mr. Bobby."

"Pour your own," said Bobby. "You poor unfortunate child." Then he turned to Thomas Hudson. "Hudson," he said. "Have another and get out."

"I can stay as long as I'm quiet," Thomas Hudson said.

"If I know you, you won't be quiet for long," Bobby said, vindictively.

Roger pointed toward the bottle and young Tom hung onto his sleeve. He'd controlled his tears and he was being brave and good.

"Mr. Davis," he said. "You don't have to."

Roger did not say anything and Mr. Bobby put the bottle in front of him again.

"Mr. Davis, you have to write tonight," young Tom said.

"You know you promised to write tonight."

"What do you think I'm drinking for?" Roger said to him.

"But, Mr. Davis, you didn't have to drink this much when you wrote *The Storm."*

"Why don't you shut up?" Roger said to him.

Young Tom was patient and brave and long-suffering.

"I will, Mr. Davis. I only do it because you asked me to. Can't we go back to the house?"

"You're a good kid, Tom," Roger said. "But we're staying here."

"For very long, Mr. Davis?"

"To the goddamn end."

"I don't think we need to, Mr. Davis," young Tom said, "Really I don't. And you know if you get so you can't see you won't be able to write."

"I'll dictate," Roger said. "Like Milton."

"I know you dictate beautifully," young Tom said. "But this morning when Miss Phelps tried to take it off the machine it was mostly music."

"I'm writing an opera," Roger said.

"I know you'll write a wonderful opera, Mr. Davis. But don't you think we ought to finish the novel first? You took a big advance on the novel."

"Finish it yourself," Roger said. "You ought to know the plot by now."

"I know the plot, Mr. Davis, and it's a lovely plot but it has that same girl in it that you had die in that other book and people may be confused."

"Dumas did the same thing."

"Don't badger him," Thomas Hudson said to young Tom. "How can he write if you badger him all the time?"

"Mr. Davis, couldn't you just get a really good secretary to write it for you? I've heard that novelists did that."

"No. Too expensive."

"Do you want me to help you, Roger?" Thomas Hudson asked.

"Yes. You can paint it."

"That's wonderful," young Tom said. "Will you truly, papa?"

"I'll paint it in a day," Thomas Hudson said.

"Paint it upside down like Michelangelo," Roger said. "Paint it

big enough so King George can read it without his spectacles."

"Are you going to paint it, papa?" David asked.

"Yes."

"Good," David said. "That's the first sensible thing I've heard."

"It won't be too difficult, papa?"

"Hell no. It's probably too simple. Who's the girl?"

"That girl Mr. Davis always has."

"Paint her in half a day," Thomas Hudson said.

"Paint her upside down," Roger said.

"Keep it clean," Thomas Hudson told him.

"Mister Bobby, may I have another slug?" Andy asked.

"How many have you had, son?" Bobby asked him.

"Only two."

"Go ahead," Bobby told him and handed him the bottle.

"Listen, Hudson, when are you going to get that picture out of here?"

"Haven't you had any offers on it?"

"No," Bobby said. "And it clutters the place up. Besides it makes me goddamn nervous. I want it out of here."

"Pardon me," one of the men from the yacht spoke to Roger. "Is that canvas for sale?"

"Who spoke to you?" Roger looked at him.

"No one," the man said. "You're Roger Davis, aren't you?"

"You're damn right I am."

"If your friend painted that canvas and it is for sale I'd like to discuss the price with him," the man said turning. "You're Thomas Hudson, aren't you?"

"Hudson is the name."

"Is the canvas for sale?"

"No," Thomas Hudson told him. "I'm sorry."

"But the bartender said—"

"He's crazy," Thomas Hudson told him. "He's an awfully good fellow. But he's crazy."

“Mr. Bobby, may I please have another gin?” Andrew asked very politely.

“Certainly, my little man,” Bobby said and served it. “Do you know what they ought to do? They ought to put your healthy charming face on the label of those gin bottles instead of that idiotic collection of berries. Hudson, why don’t you design a suitable label for a gin bottle that would reproduce the childish charm of young Andy’s face?”

“We could launch a brand,” Roger said. “They’ve got Old Tom gin. Why shouldn’t we put out Merry Andrew?”

“I’ll put up the money,” said Bobby. “We can make the gin here on the island. The little lads can bottle it and affix the labels. We can sell it wholesale and in detail.”

“It would be a return to craftsmanship,” Roger said. “Like William Morris.”

“What would we make the gin from, Mr. Bobby?” Andrew asked.

“From bonefish,” Bobby said. “And from conches.”

The yacht people did not look at Roger or Thomas Hudson nor at the boys now. They were watching Bobby and they looked worried.

“About that canvas,” the one man said.

“What canvas are you referring to, my good man?” Bobby asked him, downing another quick one.

“The very big canvas with the three waterspouts and the man in a dinghy.”

“Where?” asked Bobby.

“There,” said the man.

“Begging your pardon, sir, I think you’ve had enough. This is a respectable place. We don’t run to waterspouts and men in dinghys here.”

“I mean the picture there.”

“Don’t provoke me, sir. There’s no picture there. If there was a painting in here it would be above the bar where paintings belong

and it would be a nude reclining full length in a proper shipshape manner."

"I mean that picture there."

"What picture *where?"*

"There."

"I'd be happy to fix you a Bromo Seltzer, sir. Or call you a rickshaw," Bobby said.

"A rickshaw?"

"Yes. A goddamn rickshaw if you want it straight to your face. You're a rickshaw. And you've had enough."

"Mr. Bobby?" Andy asked very politely. "Do you think I've had enough?"

"No, my dear boy. Of course not. Serve yourself."

"Thank you, Mr. Bobby," Andy said. "This is four."

"I wish it was a hundred," Bobby said. "You're the pride of my heart."

"What do you say we get out of here, Hal," one of the men said to the man who wanted to buy the picture.

"I'd like to pick up that canvas," the other told him. "If I can get it for a decent price."

"I'd like to get out of here," the first man insisted. "Fun's fun and all that. But watching children drink is a little too much."

"Are you really serving that little boy gin?" the nice-looking blonde girl at the end of the bar toward the door asked Bobby. She was a tall girl with very fair hair and pleasant freckles. They were not redhead freckles but were the sort blondes get when they have skins that tan instead of burn.

"Yes ma'am."

"I think it's shameful," the girl said. "It's disgusting and it's shameful and it's criminal."

Roger avoided looking at the girl and Thomas Hudson kept his eyes down.

"What would you like him to drink, ma'am?" Bobby asked.

“Nothing. He shouldn’t have anything to drink.”

“Hardly seems fair,” Bobby said.

“What do you mean *fair?* Do you think it’s fair to poison a child with alcohol?”

“See, papa?” young Tom said. “I thought it was wrong for Andy to drink.”

“He’s the only one of the three who drinks, ma’am. Since Sport here stopped it,” Bobby tried to reason with her. “Do you think it’s fair to deprive the only one in a family of three boys of what little pleasure he gets?”

“Fair!” the girl said. “I think you’re a monster. And you’re another monster,” she said to Roger. “And you’re another monster, too,” she said to Thomas Hudson. “You’re all horrible and I hate you.”

There were tears in her eyes and she turned her back on the boys and Mr. Bobby and said to the men with her, “Won’t any of you *do* anything about it?”

“I think it’s a joke,” one of the men said to her. “Like that rude waiter they hire at a party. Or like double talk.”

“No, it’s not a joke. That dreadful man gives him gin. It’s horrible and it’s tragic.”

“Mr. Bobby?” Tom asked. “Is five my limit?”

“For today,” Bobby said. “I wouldn’t want you to do anything to shock the lady.”

“Oh get me out of here,” the girl said. “I won’t watch it.” She started to cry and two of the men went out with her and Thomas Hudson and Roger and the boys all felt quite bad.

The other girl, the really lovely-looking one, came over. She had a beautiful face and clear brown skin and tawny hair. She wore slacks but she was built wonderfully as far as Thomas Hudson could see and her hair was silky and it swung when she walked. He knew he had seen her before.

“It isn’t really gin, is it?” she said to Roger.

"No. Of course not."

"I'll go out and tell her," she said. "She really feels awfully badly."

She went out the door and she smiled at them as she went out. She was a wonderful-looking girl.

"Now it's over, papa," Andy said. "Can we have Cokes?"

"I'd like a beer, papa. If it wouldn't make that lady feel bad," young Tom said.

"I don't think she'd feel badly about a beer," Thomas Hudson said. "Can I buy you a drink?" he asked the man who wanted to buy the picture. "I'm sorry if we were too stupid."

"No. No," the man said. "Very interesting. The whole thing was very interesting to me. Fascinating. I've always been interested in writers and artists. Were you all improvising?"

"Yes," said Thomas Hudson. "Now about that canvas—"

"It belongs to Mr. Saunders," Thomas Hudson explained to him. "I painted it for him as a present. I don't think he wants to sell it. But it's his and he can do whatever he likes with it."

"I want to keep her," Bobby said. "Don't offer me a lot of money for her because it would just make me feel bad."

"I would really like to have it."

"So would I, goddamn it," said Bobby. "And I've got it."

"But Mr. Saunders. That is a valuable canvas to have in a place like this."

Bobby was getting angry.

"Leave me alone, will you?" he said to the man. "We were having a wonderful time. As good a time as I ever had and women have to cry and ball up everything. I know she meant right. But what the hell. Meant right gets you quicker than anything else. My old woman means right and does right and it beats the hell out of me every day. The hell with means right. Now you're here and you think you can take my picture just because you want it."

"But, Mr. Saunders, you said yourself you wanted the picture out

of here and that it was for sale."

"That was all balls," Bobby said. "That was when we were having fun."

"Then the picture is *not* for sale."

"No. The picture is *not* for sale, rent, nor charter."

"Well," said the man. "Here is my card in case it ever is for sale."

"That's fine," said Bobby. "Tom may have some up at his place he wants to sell. What about it, Tom?"

"I don't think so," Thomas Hudson said.

"I'd like to come up and see them," the man told him.

"I'm not showing anything now," Thomas Hudson answered. "I'll give you the address of the gallery in New York if you'd like it."

"Thank you. Will you write it here?"

The man had a fountain pen with him and he wrote the address on the back of one of his cards and gave another card to Thomas Hudson. Then the man thanked Thomas Hudson again and asked if he might offer him a drink.

"Can you give me any idea about the prices of the larger canvases?"

"No," Thomas Hudson said. "But the dealer will be able to."

"I'll see him as soon as I'm back in town. This canvas is extremely interesting."

"Thank you," Thomas Hudson said.

"You're quite sure it can't be sold."

"Jesus," Bobby said. "Stop it, will you? That's my picture. I had the idea for it and Tom painted it for me."

The man looked as though what he had thought of as "the charades" were beginning again so he smiled with much good fellowship.

"I don't like to be insistent—"

"You're just about as insistent as a goddamn loggerhead," Bobby told him. "Come on. Have a drink on me and forget it."

The boys were talking with Roger. “It was pretty good while it lasted, wasn’t it, Mr. Davis?” young Tom asked. “I didn’t overdo it too badly, did I?”

“It was fine,” Roger said. “Dave didn’t have much though.”

“I was just getting ready to be a monster,” David said.

“You’d have killed her, I think,” young Tom said. “She was hurt pretty badly already. Were you going to come up as a monster?”

“I had my eyelids inside out and all ready to come up,” David told them. “I was bent down fixing myself to come up when we stopped.”

“It was bad luck she was such a nice woman,” Andy said. “I hadn’t started to let it have any effect on me yet. I guess now we won’t have any chance to do another one.”

“Wasn’t Mr. Bobby wonderful?” young Tom asked. “Boy, you were swell, Mr. Bobby.”

“Sure was a pity to stop,” Bobby said. “And Constable hadn’t even come in yet. I was just beginning to get worked up. I know just how those great actors must feel.”

The girl came in through the door. As she came in, the wind blew her sweater against her and blew her hair as she turned to Roger.

“She wouldn’t come back. But it’s all right. She’s fine now.”

“Will you have a drink with us?” Roger asked her.

“I’d love to.”

Roger told her all of their names and she said that she was Audrey Bruce.

“Can I come up and see your pictures?”

“Of course,” Thomas Hudson said.

“I’d like to come with Miss Bruce,” the man of persistence said.

“Are you her father?” Roger asked him.

“No. But I’m a very old friend.”

“You can’t come,” Roger said. “You have to wait for Very Old Friends Day. Or get a card from the committee.”

“Please don’t be rude to him,” she said to Roger.

“I’m afraid I have been.”

“Don’t be anymore.”

“Fine.”

“Let’s be pleasant.”

“Good.”

“I liked Tom’s line about that same girl that is in all your books.”

“Did you really like it?” young Tom asked her. “It isn’t really accurate. I was teasing Mr. Davis.”

“I thought it was a little bit accurate.”

“You come up to the house,” Roger told her.

“Do I bring my friends?”

“No.”

“None of them?”

“Do you want them very much?”

“No.”

“Good.”

“Around what time of day do I come up to the house?”

“Any time,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Do I stay for lunch?”

“Naturally,” Roger said.

“This sounds like a splendid island,” she said. “I’m so glad we’re all pleasant.”

“David can show you how he was going to be a monster when we called it off,” Andy said to her.

“Oh dear,” she said. “We’ll have absolutely everything.”

“How long are you staying?” young Tom asked her.

“I don’t know.”

“How long is the yacht staying?” Roger asked.

“I don’t know.”

“What do you know?” Roger asked. “I mean it pleasantly.”

“Not very much. What about you?”

“I think you’re lovely,” Roger said.

“Oh,” she said. “Thank you very much.”

“Will you stay for a while?”

“I don’t know. I might.”

“Will you come up to the house now and have a drink instead of having it here?” Roger asked her.

“Let’s have one here,” she said. “It’s awfully nice here.”

XII

The next day the wind had dropped off and Roger and the boys were swimming on the beach and Thomas Hudson was on the upper porch working. Eddy had said he thought it would do David's feet no harm to swim in the salt water if he put a new dressing on them afterwards. So they had all gone in and Thomas Hudson had looked down and watched them from time to time while he painted. He was wondering about Roger and the girl and that distracted him so he stopped thinking about it. He could not help thinking of how much the girl reminded him of young Tom's mother when he had first met her. But so many girls had managed to look in such a way that they reminded him of her, and he went on working. He was sure that he would see this girl in time and he was quite sure they would see much of her. That had been clear enough. Well, she was decorative and she seemed very nice. If she reminded him of Tommy's mother, that was too damn bad. But there was nothing to do about it. He had been through that one enough times before. He kept on working.

This picture would be good he knew. The next one, with the fish in the water, was going to be the really difficult one. Maybe I should have tried it first, he thought. No, it's better to get this one done. I can always work on the other one after they are gone.

"Let me carry you up, Davy," he heard Roger say. "So you won't get dry sand in them."

"All right," David said. "Let me get them both clean here in the ocean first."

Roger carried him up the beach and onto a chair by the doorway

that faced the ocean. As they passed under the porch on the way to the chair Thomas Hudson heard David ask, “Do you think she’ll turn up, Mr. Davis?”

“I don’t know,” Roger said. “I hope so.”

“Don’t you think she’s beautiful, Mr. Davis?”

“Lovely.”

“She likes us I think. Mr. Davis, what does a girl like that do?”

“I don’t know. I didn’t ask her.”

“Tommy’s in love with her. So is Andy.”

“Are you?”

“I don’t know. I don’t get in love with people like they do. Anyway I want to see her some more. Mr. Davis, she isn’t a bitch, is she?”

“I don’t know. She doesn’t look like one. Why?”

“Tommy said he was in love with her but that she was probably just a bitch. Andy said he didn’t care if she was a bitch.”

“She doesn’t look like one,” Roger told him.

“Mr. Davis, aren’t those men with her a strange quiet lot?”

“They certainly are.”

“What do men like that do?”

“We’ll ask her when she comes.”

“Do you think she’ll come?”

“Yes,” Roger said. “I wouldn’t worry if I were you.”

“It’s Tommy and Andy that are worried. I’m in love with someone else. You know. I told you.”

“I remember. This girl looks like her, too,” Roger told him. “Maybe she saw her in the cinema and tried to look like her,” David said.

Thomas Hudson went on working.

Roger was dressing David’s feet when she came in sight walking up the beach. She was barefooted and wore a bathing suit with a skirt of the same material over it and she carried a beach bag. Thomas Hudson was glad to see that her legs were as good as her

face and as good as her breasts that he had seen under the sweater. Her arms were lovely and all of her was brown. She had no makeup on except for her lips and she had a lovely mouth that he wanted to see with no lipstick on it.

"Hello," she said. "Am I very late?"

"No," Roger told her. "We've been in but I'm going in again."

Roger had moved David's chair out to the edge of the beach and Thomas Hudson watched her as she bent over David's feet and saw the small upturning curls at the nape of her neck as the weight of her hair fell forward. The small curls were silvery in the sun against her brown skin.

"What happened to them?" she asked. "The poor feet."

"I wore them off pulling on a fish," David told her.

"How big was he?"

"We don't know. He pulled out."

"I'm awfully sorry."

"That's all right," David said. "Nobody minds about him anymore."

"Is it all right to swim with them?"

Roger was touching the worn places with Mercurochrome. They looked good and clean but the flesh was a little puckered from the salt water.

"Eddy says it's good for them."

"Who is Eddy?"

"He's our cook."

"And is your cook your doctor, too?"

"He knows about things like that," David explained. "Mr. Davis said it was all right, too."

"Does Mr. Davis say anything else?" she asked Roger.

"He's glad to see you."

"That's nice. Did you boys have a wild night?"

"Not very," Roger said. "We had a poker game and afterwards I read and went to sleep."

“Who won in the poker game?”

“Andy and Eddy,” David said. “What did you do?”

“We played backgammon.”

“Did you sleep well?” Roger asked.

“Yes. Did you?”

“Wonderfully,” he said.

“Tommy is the only one of us who plays backgammon,” David told the girl. “It was taught him by a worthless man who turned out to be a fairy.”

“Really? What a sad story.”

“The way Tommy tells it, it isn’t so sad,” David said. “There wasn’t anything bad happened.”

“I think fairies are all awfully sad,” she said. “Poor fairies.”

“This was sort of funny though,” David said. “Because this worthless man that taught Tommy backgammon was explaining to Tommy what it meant to be a fairy and all about the Greeks and Damon and Pythias and David and Jonathan. You know, sort of like when they tell you about the fish and the roe and the milt and the bees fertilizing the pollen and all that at school and Tommy asked him if he’d ever read a book by Gide. What was it called, Mr. Davis? Not *Corydon.* That other one? With Oscar Wilde in it.”

“Si le grain ne meurt,” Roger said.

“It’s a pretty dreadful book that Tommy took to read the boys in school. They couldn’t understand it in French, of course, but Tommy used to translate it. Lots of it is awfully dull but it gets pretty dreadful when Mr. Gide gets to Africa.”

“I’ve read it,” the girl said.

“Oh fine,” David said. “Then you know the sort of thing I mean. Well this man who’d taught Tommy backgammon and turned out to be a fairy was awfully surprised when Tommy spoke about this book but he was sort of pleased because now he didn’t have to go through all the part about the bees and flowers of that business and he said, ‘I’m so glad you know,’ or something like that and then

Tommy said this to him exactly; I memorized it: 'Mr. Edwards, I take only an academic interest in homosexuality. I thank you very much for teaching me backgammon and I must bid you good day.' "

"Tommy had wonderful manners then," David told her.

"He'd just come from living in France with papa and he had wonderful manners."

"Did you live in France, too?"

"We all did at different times. But Tommy's the only one who remembers it properly. Tommy has the best memory anyway. He remembers truly, too. Did you ever live in France?"

"For a long time."

"Did you go to school there?"

"Yes. Outside of Paris."

"Wait till you get with Tommy," David said. "He knows Paris and outside of Paris the way I know the reef here or the flats. Probably I don't know them even as well as Tommy knows Paris."

She was sitting down now in the shade of the porch and she was sifting the white sand through her toes.

"Tell me about the reef and the flats," she said.

"It's better if I show them to you," David said. "I'll take you out in a skiff on the flats and we can go goggle-fishing if you like it. That's the only way to know the reef."

"I'd love to go."

"Who's on the yacht?" Roger asked.

"People. You wouldn't like them."

"They seemed very nice."

"Do we have to talk that way?"

"No," Roger said.

"You met the man of persistence. He's the richest and the dullest. Can't we just not talk about them? They're all good and wonderful and dull as hell."

Young Tom came up with Andrew following him. They had been swimming far down the beach and when they had come out and

seen the girl by David's chair they had come running on the hard sand and Andrew had been left behind. He came up out of breath.

"You could have waited," he said to young Tom.

"I'm sorry, Andy," young Tom said. Then he said, "Good morning. We waited for you but then we went in."

"I'm sorry I'm late."

"You're not late. We're all going in again."

"I'll stay out," David said. "You all go in now. I've been talking too much anyway."

"You don't have to worry about undertow," young Tom told her. "It's a long gradual slope."

"What about sharks and barracuda?"

"Sharks only come in at night," Roger told her. "Barracuda never bother you. They'd only hit you if the water was roily or muddy."

"If they just saw a flash of something and didn't know what it was they might strike at it by mistake," David explained. "But they don't bite people in clear water. There's nearly always barracuda around where we swim."

"You can see them float along over the sand right alongside of you," young Tom said. "They're very curious. But they always go away."

"If you had fish, though," David told her, "like goggle-fishing and the fish on a stringer or in a bag, they'd go after the fish and they might hit you by accident because they're so fast."

"Or if you were swimming in a bunch of mullet or a big school of sardines," young Tom said. "They could hit you when they were slashing in after the school fish."

"You swim between Tom and me," Andy said. "Nothing will bother you that way."

The waves were breaking heavily on the beach and the sandpipers and Wilson plover ran twinklingly out onto the hard new-wet sand as the water receded before the next wave broke.

“Do you think we ought to swim when it’s this rough and we can’t see?”

“Oh, sure,” David told her. “Just watch where you walk before you start to swim. It’s probably too rough for a sting ray to lie in the sand anyway.”

“Mr. Davis and I will look after you,” young Tom said.

“I’ll look after you,” Andy said.

“If you bump into any fish in the surf they’re probably little pompanos,” David said. “They come in on the high tide to feed on the sand fleas. They’re awfully pretty in the water and they’re curious and friendly.”

“It sounds a little like swimming in an aquarium,” she said.

“Andy will teach you how to let the air out of your lungs to stay down deep,” David told her. “Tom will show you how not to get in trouble with morays.”

“Don’t try to scare her, Dave,” young Tom said. “We’re not big kings of underwater like he is. But just because he’s a king of underwater, Miss Bruce—”

“Audrey.”

“Audrey,” Tom said and stopped.

“What were you saying, Tommy?”

“I don’t know,” young Tom said. “Let’s go in and swim.” Thomas Hudson worked on for a while. Then he went down and sat by David and watched the four of them in the surf. The girl was swimming without a cap and she swam and dove as sleek as a seal. She was as good a swimmer as Roger except for the difference in power. When they came in onto the beach and came walking toward the house on the hard sand, the girl’s hair was wet and went straight back from her forehead so there was nothing to trick the shape of her head and Thomas Hudson thought he had never seen a lovelier face nor a finer body. Except one, he thought. Except the one finest and loveliest. Don’t think about it, he told himself. Just look at this girl and be glad she’s here.

“How was it?” he asked her.

“Wonderful,” she smiled at him. “But I didn’t see any fish at all,” she told David.

“You probably wouldn’t in so much surf,” David said. “Unless you bumped into them.”

She was sitting on the sand with her hands clasped around her knees. Her hair hung, damp, to her shoulders and the two boys sat beside her. Roger lay on the sand in front of her with his forehead on his folded arms. Thomas Hudson opened the screen door and went inside the house and then upstairs to the porch to work on the picture. He thought that was the best thing for him to do.

Below on the sand, where Thomas Hudson no longer watched them, the girl was looking at Roger.

“Are you gloomy?” she asked him.

“No.”

“Thoughtful?”

“A little maybe. I don’t know.”

“On a day like this it’s nice not to think at all.”

“All right. Let’s not think. Is it all right if I watch the waves?”

“The waves are free.”

“Do you want to go in again?”

“Later.”

“Who taught you to swim?” Roger asked her.

“You did.”

Roger raised his head and looked at her.

“Don’t you remember the beach at Cap d’Antibes? The little beach. Not Eden Roc. I used to watch you dive at Eden Roc.”

“What the hell are you doing here and what’s your real name?”

“I came to see you,” she said. “And I suppose my name is Audrey Bruce.”

“Should we go, Mr. Davis?” young Tom asked. Roger did not even answer him.

“What’s your real name?”

“I was Audrey Raeburn.”

“And why did you come to see me?”

“Because I wanted to. Was it wrong?”

“I guess not,” Roger said. “Who said I was here?”

“A dreadful man I met at a cocktail party in New York. You’d had a fight with him here. He said you were a beachcomber.”

“Well it’s combed pretty neatly,” Roger said looking out to sea.

“He said you were quite a few other things, too. None of them were very complimentary.”

“Who were you at Antibes with?”

“With mother and Dick Raeburn. Now do you remember?” Roger sat up and looked at her. Then he went over and put his arms around her and kissed her.

“I’ll be damned,” he said.

“Was it all right to come?” she asked.

“You old brat,” Roger said. “Is it really you?”

“Do I have to prove it? Couldn’t you just believe it?”

“I don’t remember any secret marks.”

“Do you like me now?”

“I love you now.”

“You couldn’t expect me to look like a colt forever. Do you remember when you told me I looked like a colt at Auteuil that time and I cried?”

“It was a compliment, too. I said you looked like a colt by Tenniel out of *Alice in Wonderland.”*

“I cried.”

“Mr. Davis,” Andy said. “And Audrey. We boys are going to go and get some Cokes. Do you want any?”

“No, Andy. You, brat?”

“Yes. I’d love one.”

“Come on, Dave.”

“No. I want to hear it.”

“You are a bastard for a brother sometimes,” young Tom said.

“Bring me one, too,” David said. “Go right ahead, Mr. Davis, don’t mind me at all.”

“I don’t mind you, Davy,” the girl said.

“But where did you go and why are you Audrey Bruce?”

“It’s sort of complicated.”

“I guess it was.”

“Mother married a man named Bruce finally.”

“I knew him.”

“I liked him.”

“I pass,” Roger said. “But why the Audrey?”

“It’s my middle name. I took it because I didn’t like mother’s.”

“I didn’t like mother.”

“Neither did I. I liked Dick Raeburn and I liked Bill Bruce and I loved you and I loved Tom Hudson. He didn’t recognize me either, did he?”

“I don’t know. He’s strange and he might not say. I know he thinks you look like Tommy’s mother.”

“I wish I did.”

“You do damned plenty enough.”

“Truly you do,” David said. “That’s something I know about. I’m sorry, Audrey. I ought to shut up and go away.”

“You didn’t love me and you didn’t love Tom.”

“Oh yes, I did. You’ll never know.”

“Where’s mother now?”

“She’s married to a man named Geoffrey Townsend and lives in London.”

“Does she still drug?”

“Of course. And she’s beautiful.”

“Really?”

“No. She really is. This isn’t just filial piety.”

“You had a lot of filial piety once.”

“I know. I used to pray for everyone. Everything used to break my heart. I used to do First Fridays for mother to give her the grace

of a happy death. You don't know how I prayed for you, Roger."

"I wish it would have done more good," Roger said.

"So do I," she said.

"You can't tell, Audrey. You never know when it may, David said. "I don't mean that Mr. Davis needs to be prayed for. I just mean about prayer technically."

"Thanks, Dave," Roger said. "What ever became of Bruce?"

"He died. Don't you remember?"

"No. I remember Dick Raeburn did."

"I imagine you do."

"I do."

Young Tom and Andy came back with the bottles of Coca-Cola and Andy gave a cold bottle to the girl and one to David.

"Thank you," she said. "It's wonderful and cold."

"Audrey," young Tom said. "I remember you now. You used to come to the studio with Mr. Raeburn. You never talked at all. You and I and Papa and Mr. Raeburn used to go to the different circuses and we used to go racing. But you weren't as beautiful then."

"Sure she was," Roger said. "Ask your father."

"I'm sorry about Mr. Raeburn dying," young Tom said. "I remember him dying very well. He was killed by a bobsled that rode high over a turn and went into the crowd. He'd been very ill and Papa and I went to visit him. Then he was better after a while and he went to watch the bob races although he shouldn't have. We weren't there when he was killed. I'm sorry if talking about it upsets you, Audrey."

"He was a nice man," Audrey said. "It doesn't upset me, Tommy. It was a long time ago."

"Did you know either of us boys?" Andy asked her.

"How could she, horseman? We weren't born yet," David said.

"How was I to know?" Andy asked. "I can't remember anything about France and I don't think you remember much."

"I don't pretend to. Tommy remembers France for all of us. Later

on I'll remember this island. And I can remember every picture papa ever painted that I've seen."

"Can you remember the racing ones?" Audrey asked.

"Everyone I've seen."

"I was in some of them," Audrey said. "At Longchamps and at Auteuil and at St. Cloud. It's always the back of my head."

"I can remember the back of your head then," young Tom said. "And your hair was down to your waist and I was two steps above you to see better. It was a hazy day the way it is in the fall when it's blue smoky looking and we were in the upper stand right opposite the water jump and on our left was the bullfinch and the stone wall. The finish was on the side closer to us and the water jump was on the inner course of the track. I was always above and behind you to see better except when we were down at the track."

"I thought you were a funny little boy then."

"I guess I was. And you never talked. Maybe because I was so young. But wasn't Auteuil a beautiful track though?"

"Wonderful. I was there last year."

"Maybe we can go this year, Tommy," David said. "Did you use to go to the races with her, too, Mr. Davis?"

"No," Roger said. "I was just her swimming teacher."

"You were my hero."

"Wasn't papa ever your hero?" Andrew asked.

"Of course he was. But I couldn't let him be my hero as much as I wanted because he was married. When he and Tommy's mother were divorced I wrote him a letter. It was very powerful and I was ready to take Tommy's mother's place in any way I could. But I never sent it because he married Davy's and Andy's mother."

"Things are certainly complicated," young Tom said.

"Tell us some more about Paris," David said. "We ought to learn all we can if we're going there now."

"Do you remember when we'd be down on the rail, Audrey, and how after the horses came over the last obstacle they would be

coming straight down toward us and the way they would look coming bigger and bigger and the noise they would make on the turf when they would go past?"

"And how cold it used to be and how we would get close to the big braziers to get warm and eat the sandwiches from the bar?"

"I loved it in the fall," young Tom said. "We used to ride back home in a carriage, an open one, do you remember? Out of the Bois and then along the river with it just getting dark and the burning leaves smell and the tugs towing barges on the river."

"Do you really remember it that well? You were an awfully small boy."

"I remember every bridge on the river from Suresnes to Charenton," Tommy told her.

"You can't."

"I can't name them. But I've got them in my head."

"I don't believe you can remember them all. And part of the river's ugly and many of the bridges are."

"I know it. But I was there a long time after I knew you, and papa and I used to walk the whole river. The ugly parts and the beautiful parts and I've fished a lot of it with different friends of mine."

"You really fished in the Seine?"

"Of course."

"Did papa fish it, too?"

"Not so much. He used to fish sometimes at Charenton. But he wanted to walk when he finished work and so we would walk until I got too tired and then get a bus back some way. After we had some money we used to take taxis or horsecabs."

"You must have had money when we were going to the races."

"I think we did that year," Tommy said. "I can't remember that. Sometimes we had money and sometimes we didn't."

"We always had money," Audrey said. "Mother never married anyone who didn't have lots of money."

“Are you rich, Audrey?” Tommy asked.

“No,” the girl said. “My father spent his money and lost his money after he married mother and none of my stepfathers ever made any provision for me.”

“You don’t have to have money,” Andrew said to her.

“Why don’t you live with us?” young Tom asked her. “You’d be fine with us.”

“It sounds lovely. But I have to make a living.”

“We’re going to Paris,” Andrew said. “You come along. It will be wonderful. You and I can go and see all the arrondissements together.”

“I’ll have to think it over,” the girl said.

“Do you want me to make you a drink to help you decide?” David said. “That’s what they always do in Mr. Davis’s books.”

“Don’t ply me with liquor.”

“That’s an old white slaver’s trick,” young Tom said. “Then the next thing they know they’re in Buenos Aires.”

“They must give them something awfully strong,” David said. “That’s a long trip.”

“I don’t think there’s anything much stronger than the way Mr. Davis makes martinis,” Andrew said. “Make her a martini, please, Mr. Davis.”

“Do you want one, Audrey?” Andrew asked.

“Yes. If it’s not too long before lunch.”

Roger got up to make them and young Tom came over and sat by her. Andrew was sitting at her feet.

“I don’t think you ought to take it, Audrey,” he said. “It’s the first step. Remember *ce n’est que le premier pas qui conte*.”

Up on the porch Thomas Hudson kept on painting. He could not keep from hearing their talk but he had not looked down at them since they had come in from swimming. He was having a difficult time staying in the carapace of work that he had built for his protection and he thought, if I don’t work now I may lose it. Then

he thought that there would be time to work when they were all gone. But he knew he must keep on working now or he would lose the security he had built for himself with work. I will do exactly as much as I would have done if they were not here, he thought. Then I will clear up and go down and the hell with thinking of Raeburn or of the old days or of anything. But as he worked he felt a loneliness coming into him already. It was next week when they would leave. Work, he told himself. Get it right and keep your habits because you are going to need them.

When he had finished work and gone down to join them, Thomas Hudson was still thinking about the painting and he said "Hi" to the girl and then looked away from her. Then he looked back.

"I couldn't help hearing it," he said. "Or overhearing it. I'm glad we're old friends."

"So am I. Did you know?"

"Maybe," he said. "Let's get lunch. Are you dry, Audrey?"

"I'll change in the shower," she said. "I have a shirt and the skirt to this."

"Tell Joseph and Eddy that we're ready," Thomas Hudson said to young Tom. "I'll show you the shower, Audrey."

Roger went into the house.

"I thought I shouldn't be here under false pretenses," Audrey said.

"You weren't."

"Don't you think I could be any good for him?"

"You might. What he needs is to work well to save his soul. I don't know anything about souls. But he misplaced his the first time he went out to the Coast."

"But he's going to write a novel now. A great novel."

"Where did you hear that?"

"It was in one of the columns. Cholly Knickerbocker, I think."

"Oh," Thomas Hudson said. "Then it must be true."

“Don’t you truly think I might be good for him?”

“You might.”

“There are some complications.”

“There always are.”

“Should I tell you now?”

“No,” Thomas Hudson said. “You better get dressed and comb your hair and get up there. He might meet some other woman while he was waiting.”

“You weren’t like this in the old days. I thought you were the kindest man I ever knew.”

“I’m awfully sorry, Audrey. And I’m glad you’re here.”

“We are old friends, aren’t we?”

“Sure,” he said. “Change and fix yourself up and get up there.”

He looked away from the girl and she shut the door of the shower. He did not know what made him feel as he did. But the happiness of the summer began to drain out of him as when the tide changes on the flats and the ebb begins in the channel that opens out to sea. He watched the sea and the line of beach and he noticed that the tide had changed and the shore birds were working busily well down the slope of new wet sand. The breakers were diminishing as they receded. He looked a long way up along the shore and then went into the house.

XIII

They had a fine time the last few days. It was as good as any of the time before and there was no pre-going sadness. The yacht left and Audrey took a room over the Ponce de León. But she stayed at the house and slept on a cot on the sleeping porch at the far end of the house and used the guest room.

She did not say anything again about being in love with Roger. All Roger said to Thomas Hudson about her was, "She's married to some sort of a son of a bitch."

"You couldn't expect her to wait all her life for you, could you?"

"At least he's a son of a bitch."

"Aren't they always? You'll find he has his nice side."

"He's rich."

"That's probably his nice side," Thomas Hudson said.

"They're always married to some son of a bitch and he always has some tremendously nice side."

"All right," Roger said. "Let's not talk about it."

"You're going to do the book, aren't you?"

"Sure. That's what she wants me to do."

"Is that why you're going to do it?"

"Shove it, Tom," Roger told him.

"Do you want to use the Cuba House? It's only a shack. But you'd be away from people."

"No. I want to go West."

"The Coast?"

"No. Not the Coast. Could I stay at the ranch for a while?"

"There's only the one cabin that's on the far beach. I rented the

rest."

"That would be fine."

The girl and Roger took long walks on the beach and swam together and with the boys. The boys went bone-fishing and took Audrey bone-fishing and goggle-fishing on the reef. Thomas Hudson worked hard and all the time he was working and the boys were out on the flats he had the good feeling that they would be home soon and they would be having supper or dinner together. He was worried when they were goggle-fishing but he knew Roger and Eddy would make them be careful. One time they all went trolling for a full day up to the furthest light at the end of the bank and had a wonderful day with bonito and dolphin and three big wahoo. He painted a canvas of a wahoo with his strange flattened head and his stripes around his long speed-built body for Andy, who had caught the biggest one. He painted him against a background of the big spider-legged lighthouse with the summer clouds and the green of the banks.

Then one day the old Sikorsky amphibian circled the house once and then landed in the bay and they rowed the three boys out to her in the dinghy. Joseph sculled out in another dinghy with their bags. Young Tom said, "Goodbye, papa. It certainly was a swell summer."

David said, "Goodbye, papa. It certainly was wonderful. Don't worry about anything. We'll be careful."

Andrew said, "Goodbye, papa. Thanks for a wonderful, wonderful summer and for the trip to Paris."

They climbed up into the cockpit door and all waved from the door to Audrey, who was standing on the dock, and called, "Goodbye! Goodbye, Audrey."

Roger was helping them up and they said, "Goodbye, Mr. Davis. Goodbye, papa." Then very loud and carrying over the water, "Goodbye, Audrey!"

Then the door closed and locked and they were faces through

the small glass panes and then they were water-splashed faces as the old coffee mills revved up. Thomas Hudson pulled away from the rush of spray and the ancient, ugly plane taxied out and took off into the little breeze there was and then circled once and straightened course, steady, ugly, and slow across the Gulf.

Thomas Hudson knew Roger and Audrey would be leaving and as the run-boat was coming the next day he asked Roger when he was going.

"Tomorrow, old Tom," Roger said. "With Wilson?"

"Yes. I asked him to come back."

"I just wanted to know about ordering on the run-boat." So the next day they left the same way. Thomas Hudson kissed the girl goodbye and she kissed him. She had cried when the boys left and she cried that day and held him close and hard.

"Take good care of him and take good care of you."

"I'm going to try. You've been awful good to us, Tom."

"Nonsense."

"I'll write," Roger said. "Is there anything you want me to do out there?"

"Have fun. You might let me know how things are."

"I will. This one will write, too."

So they were gone, too, and Thomas Hudson stopped in at Bobby's on the way home.

"Going to be goddamn lonely," Bobby said.

"Yes," Thomas Hudson said. "It's going to be goddamn lonely."

XIV

Thomas Hudson was unhappy as soon as the boys were gone. But he thought that was normal lonesomeness for them and he just kept on working. The end of a man's own world does not come as it does in one of the great paintings Mr. Bobby had outlined. It comes with one of the island boys bringing a radio message up the road from the local post office and saying, "Please sign on the detachable part of the envelope. We're sorry, Mr. Tom."

He gave the boy a shilling. But the boy looked at it and put it down on the table.

"I don't care for a tip, Mr. Tom," the boy said and went out. He read it. Then he put it in his pocket and went out the door and sat on the porch by the sea. He took the radio form out and read it again. YOUR SONS DAVID AND ANDREW KILLED WITH THEIR MOTHER IN MOTOR ACCIDENT NEAR BIARRITZ ATTENDING TO EVERYTHING PENDING YOUR ARRIVAL DEEPEST SYMPATHY. It was signed by the Paris branch of his New York bank.

Eddy came out. He had heard about it from Joseph who had heard about it from one of the boys at the radio shack.

Eddy sat down by him and said, "Shit, Tom, how can such things happen?"

"I don't know," said Thomas Hudson. "I guess they hit something or something ran into them."

"I'll bet Davy wasn't driving," Eddy said.

"I'll bet so too. But it doesn't matter anymore."

Thomas Hudson looked out at the flatness of the blue sea and the darker blue of the Gulf. The sun was low and soon it would be

behind the clouds.

"Do you think their mother was driving?"

"Probably. Maybe they had a chauffeur. What difference does it make?"

"Do you think it could have been Andy?"

"Could be. His mother might let him."

"He's conceited enough," Eddy said.

"He was," said Thomas Hudson. "I don't think he's conceited now."

The sun was going down and there were clouds in front of it.

"We'll get a wire to Wilkinson on their next radio schedule to come over early and for him to call up and save me space on a plane to New York."

"What do you want me to do while you're away?"

"Just look after things. I'll leave you some checks for each month. If there are any blows, get plenty of good help with the boat and the house."

"I'll do everything," Eddy said. "But I don't give a shit about anything anymore."

"I don't either," said Thomas Hudson.

"We've got young Tom."

"For the time being," Thomas Hudson said and for the first time he looked straight down the long and perfect perspective of the blankness ahead.

"You'll make it all right," Eddy said.

"Sure. When didn't I ever make it?"

"You can stay in Paris a while and then go to the Cuba house and young Tom can keep you company. You can paint good over there and it will be like a change."

"Sure," said Thomas Hudson.

"You can travel and that'll be good. Go on those big boats like I always wanted to go on. Travel on all of them. Let them take you anywhere they go."

“Sure.”

“Shit,’ said Eddy. “What the fuck they kill that Davy for?”

“Let’s leave it alone, Eddy,” Thomas Hudson said. “It’s way past things we know about.”

“Fuck everything,” Eddy said and pushed his hat back on his head.

“We’ll play it out the way we can,” Thomas Hudson told him. But now he knew he did not have much interest in the game.

XV

On the eastward crossing on the *Île de France* Thomas Hudson learned that hell was not necessarily as it was described by Dante or any other of the great hell-describers, but could be a comfortable, pleasant, and well-loved ship taking you toward a country that you had always sailed for with anticipation. It had many circles and they were not fixed as in those of the great Florentine egotist. He had gone aboard the ship early, thinking of it, he now knew, as a refuge from the city where he had feared meeting people who would speak to him about what had happened. He thought that on the ship he could come to some terms with his sorrow, not knowing, yet, that there are no terms to be made with sorrow. It can be cured by death and it can be blunted or anesthetized by various things. Time is supposed to cure it, too. But if it is cured by anything less than death, the chances are that it was not true sorrow.

One of the things that blunts it temporarily through blunting everything else is drinking and another thing that can keep the mind away from it is work. Thomas Hudson knew about both these remedies. But he also knew the drinking would destroy the capacity for producing satisfying work and he had built his life on work for so long now that he kept that as the one thing that he must not lose.

But since he knew he could not work now for some time he planned to drink and read and exercise until he was tired enough to sleep. He had slept on the plane. But he had not slept in New York.

Now he was in his stateroom, which had a sitting room connected with it, and the porters had left his bags and the big

package of magazines and newspapers he had bought. He had thought they would be the easiest thing to start with. He gave his ticket to the room steward and asked him for a bottle of Perrier water and some ice. When they came, he took out a fifth of good Scotch from one of his bags and opened it and made himself a drink. Then he cut the string around the big bundle of magazines and papers and spread them on the table. The magazines looked fresh and virginal compared with the way they looked when they arrived at the island. He took up *The New Yorker.* At the island he had always saved it for the evenings and it had been a long time since he had seen a *New Yorker* of the week of publication or one that had not been folded. He sat in the deep comfortable chair and drank his drink and learned that you cannot read *The New Yorker* when people that you love have just died. He tried *Time* and he could read it all right, including "Milestones," where the two boys were dead complete with their ages; their mother's age, not quite accurate; her marital status, and the statement that she had divorced him in I933.

Newsweek had the same facts. But reading the short item Thomas Hudson had the odd sensation that the man who wrote it was sorry that the boys were dead.

He made himself another drink and thought how much better the Perrier was than anything else you could put in whisky and then he read both *Time* and *Newsweek* through. What the hell do you suppose she was doing at Biarritz? he thought. At least she could have gone to St. Jean-de-Luz.

From that he knew that the whisky was doing some good. Give them up now, he told himself. Just remember how they were and write them off. You have to do it sooner or later. Do it now.

Read some more, he said. Just then the ship started to move. It was moving very slowly and he did not look out of the window of the sitting room. He sat in the comfortable chair and read through the pile of papers and magazines and drank the Scotch and Perrier.

You haven't any problem at all, he told himself. You've given them up and they're gone. You should not have loved them so damn much in the first place. You shouldn't have loved them and you shouldn't have loved their mother. Listen to the whisky talking, he said to himself. What a solvent of our problems. *The solvent alchemist that in a trice our leaden gold into shit transmutes.* That doesn't even scan. *Our leaden gold to shit transmutes* is better.

I wonder where Roger is with that girl, he thought. The bank will know where Tommy is. I know where I am. I'm in here with a bottle of Old Parr. Tomorrow I'll sweat this all out in the gym. I'll use the heat box. I'll ride on one of those bicycles that goes nowhere and on a mechanical horse. That's what I need. A good ride on a mechanical horse. Then I'll get a good rubdown. Then I'll meet somebody in the bar and I'll talk about other things. It's only six days. Six days is easy.

He went to sleep that night and when he woke in the night he heard the movement of the ship through the sea and at first, smelling the sea, he thought that he was at home in the house on the island and that he had wakened from a bad dream. Then he knew it was not a bad dream and he smelled the heavy grease on the edges of the open window. He switched the light on and drank some of the Perrier water. He was very thirsty.

There was a tray with some sandwiches and fruit on the table where the steward had left them the night before and there was still ice in the bucket that held the Perrier.

He knew he should eat something and he looked at the clock on the wall. It was three-twenty in the morning. The sea air was cool and he ate a sandwich and two apples and then took some ice out of the bucket and made himself a drink. The Old Parr was about gone but he had another bottle and now, in the cool of the early morning, he sat in the comfortable chair and drank and read *The New Yorker.* He found that he could read it now and he found that he enjoyed drinking in the night.

For years he had kept an absolute rule about not drinking in the night and never drinking before he had done his work except on non-working days. But now, as he woke in the night, he felt the simple happiness of breaking training. It was the first return of any purely animal happiness or capacity for happiness that he had experienced since the cable had come.

The New Yorker was very good, he thought. And it's evidently a magazine you can read on the fourth day after something happens. Not on the first or the second or the third. But on the fourth. That was useful to know. After *The New Yorker* he read *The Ring* and then he read everything that was readable in *The Atlantic Monthly* and some that was not. Then he made his third drink and read *Harper's*. You see, he said to himself, there's nothing to it.

Part II
Cuba

After they were all gone he lay on the fiber matting on the floor and listened to the wind. It was blowing a gale from the northwest and he spread blankets on the floor, piled pillows to brace against the stuffed chairback he placed against the leg of the living room table, and wearing a long, peaked cap to shade his eyes, read his mail in the good light from the big reading lamp that stood on the table. His cat lay on his chest and he pulled a light blanket over them both and opened and read the letters and drank from a glass of whisky and water that he replaced on the floor between sips. His hand found the glass when he wanted it.

The cat was purring, but he could not hear him because he had a silent purr, and he would hold a letter in one hand and touch the cat's throat with the finger of his other hand.

"You have a throat mike, Boise," he said. "Do you love me?" The cat kneaded his chest softly with the claws just catching in the wool of the man's heavy blue jersey and he felt the cat's long, lovingly spread weight and the purring under his fingers.

"She's a bitch, Boise," he told the cat and opened another letter.

The cat put his head under the man's chin and rubbed it there.

"They'll scratch the hell out of you, Boise," the man said and stroked the cat's head with the stubble of his chin. "Womens don't like them. It's a shame you don't drink, Boy. You do damned near everything else."

The cat had originally been named after the cruiser *Boise* but now, for a long time, the man had called him Boy for short.

He read the second letter through without comment and reached out and took a drink of the whisky and water.

"Well," he said. "We aren't getting anywhere. I'll tell you, Boy. You read the letters and I'll lie on your chest and purr. How would you like that?"

The cat put his head up to rub against the man's chin and the man rubbed against it pushing his beard stubble down between the cat's ears and along the back of his head and between his shoulder blades while he opened the third letter.

"Did you worry about us, Boise, when the blow came up?" he asked. "I wish you could have seen us come into the mouth of the harbor with the sea breaking over the Morro. You'd have been spooked, Boy. We came in in a bloody, huge, breaking sea like a damn surfboard."

The cat lay, contentedly, breathing in rhythm with the man.

He was a big cat, long and loving, the man thought, and poor from much night hunting.

"Did you do any good while I was away, Boy?" He had laid the letter down and was stroking the cat under the blanket. "Did you get many?" The cat rolled on his side and offered his stomach to be caressed the way he had done when he was a kitten, in the time when he had been happy. The man put his arms around him and held him tight against his chest, the big cat on his side, his head under the man's chin. Under the pressure of the man's arms he turned suddenly and lay flat against the man, his claws dug into the sweater, his body pressed tight. He was not purring now.

"I'm sorry, Boy," the man said. "I'm awfully sorry. Let me read this other damned letter. There's nothing we can do. You don't know anything to do—do you?"

The cat lay against him, heavy and unpurring and desperate.

The man stroked him and read the letter. "Just take it easy, Boy," he said. "There isn't any solution. If I ever find any solution I'll tell you."

By the time he had finished the third and longest letter the big black and white cat was asleep. He was asleep in the position of the Sphinx, but with his head lowered in the man's chest.

I'm awfully glad, the man thought. I ought to undress and take a bath and go to bed properly but there will be no hot water and I

wouldn't sleep in a bed tonight. Too much movement. The bed would throw me. Probably won't sleep here either with that old beast on me.

"Boy," he said. "I'm going to lift you off so I can lie on my side."

He lifted the heavy limp weight of the cat, that came alive suddenly in his hands, and then was limp again, and laid him by his side, then turned over to rest on his right elbow. The cat lay along his back. He had resented it while he was being moved but now he was asleep again, curled up against the man. The man took the three letters and read them through for the second time. He decided not to read the papers and reached up and put the light out and lay on his side, feeling the touch of the cat's body against his buttocks. He lay with his two arms around a pillow and his head on another pillow. Outside the wind was blowing hard and the floor of the room still had some of the motion of the flying bridge. He had been on the bridge nineteen hours before they had come in.

He lay there and tried to sleep, but he could not. His eyes were very tired and he did not want the light on, nor to read, so he lay there and waited for morning. Through the blankets he could feel the matting, made to the measure of the big room, that had been brought from Samoa on a cruiser six months before Pearl. It covered all the tiled floor of the room, but where the French doors opened onto the patio it had been bent back and buckled by the movement of the doors and he could feel the wind get under it and billow it as the wind came in under the gap below the door frames. He thought this wind would blow from the northwest at least another day, then go into the north and finally blow itself out from the northeast. That was the way it moved in winter but it might stay in the northeast for several days, blowing hard, before it settled into the *brisa* which was the local name for the northeast trade wind. Blowing at gale force out of the northeast against the Gulf Stream it made a very heavy sea, one of the heaviest he had ever seen anywhere, and he knew no Kraut would surface in it. So, he

thought, we will be ashore at least four days. Then they will be up for sure.

He thought about this last trip and how the blow had caught them sixty miles down the coast and thirty offshore and the punishing trip in when he had decided to come into Havana rather than Bahia Honda. He had punished her all right. He had punished her plenty and there were several things he would have to check. It probably would have been better to put in at Bahia Honda. But they had been in there too much lately. He had been out twelve days, too, expecting to be out not more than ten. He was low on certain things and he could not be at all sure of the duration of this blow; so he had made the decision to come into Havana and had taken the beating. In the morning he would bathe, shave, clean up, and go in and make his report to the Naval Attaché. They might have wanted him to stay down the coast. But he knew nothing would surface in this weather; it was impossible for them to. That was all there was to it, really. If he was right on that, the rest of it would be OK although things were not always that simple. They certainly were not.

The floor hardened against his right hip and his thigh and right shoulder, so he lay on his back now and rested against the muscles of his shoulders, drawing his knees up under the blanket and letting his heels push against the blanket. This took some of the tiredness out of his body and he put his left hand on the sleeping cat and stroked him.

"You relax awfully well, Boy, and you sleep good," he said to the cat. "I guess it isn't too bad, then."

He thought of letting some of the other cats out so he would have them to talk to and for company now that Boise was asleep. But he decided against it. It would hurt Boise and make him jealous. Boise had been outside the house waiting for them when they had driven up in the station wagon. He had been terribly excited and had been underfoot during the unloading, greeting

everyone and slipping in and out each time a door was opened. He had probably waited outside every night since they left. From the time he had orders to go, the cat knew it. Certainly he could not tell about orders; but he knew the first symptoms of preparation, and, as they proceeded through the various phases to the final disorder of the people sleeping in the house (he always had them sleep in by midnight when leaving before daylight), the cat became steadily more upset and nervous until, finally, when they loaded to leave, he was desperate and they had to be careful to lock him in so that he would not follow down the drive, into the village, and out onto the highway.

One time on the Central Highway he had seen a cat that had been hit by a car and the cat, fresh hit and dead, looked exactly like Boy. His back was black and his throat, chest, and forefeet were white and there was the black mask across his face. He knew it couldn't be Boy because it was at least six miles from the farm; but it had made him feel sick inside and he had stopped the car and gone back and lifted the cat and made sure it was not Boy and then laid him by the side of the road so nothing else would run over him. The cat was in good condition, so he knew he was someone's cat, and he left him by the road so they would find him and know about him rather than have to worry about him. Otherwise he would have taken the cat into the car and had him buried at the farm.

That evening, coming back to the farm, the body of the cat was gone from where he had left him so he thought that his people must have found him. That night, when he had sat in the big chair reading, with Boise by his side in the chair, he had thought that he did not know what he would do if Boise should be killed. He thought, from his actions and his desperations, that the cat felt the same way about the man.

He sweats them out worse than I do. Why do you do it, Boy? If you would take them easier you would be much better off. I take them as easy as I can, he said to himself. I really do. But Boise can't.

At sea he thought about Boise and his strange habits and his desperate, hopeless love. He remembered him the first time he had seen him when he was a kitten playing with his reflection on the glass top of the cigar counter of the bar at Cojímar that was built out on the rocks overlooking the harbor. They had come down to the bar on a bright Christmas morning. There were a few drunks there left over from the celebration of the night before, but the wind was blowing freshly from the east through the open restaurant and the bar, and the light was so bright and the air felt so new and cool that it was no morning for drunks.

"Shut the doors against that wind," one of them said to the proprietor.

"No," the proprietor said. "I like it. Go and find a lee somewhere else if it's too fresh."

"We pay to be comfortable," one of the leftovers from the night's drinking said.

"No. You pay for what you drink. Find another place to be comfortable."

He looked out across the open terrace of the bar at the sea, dark blue and with whitecaps, with the fishing boats crisscrossing it sailing and trolling for dolphin. There were half a dozen fishermen at the bar and two tables of them sitting on the terrace. They were fishermen who had done well the day before, or who believed the good weather and the current would hold and were taking a chance and staying in for Christmas. None of them that the man, whose name was Thomas Hudson, knew ever went to church even on Christmas and none of them dressed, consciously, as fishermen. They were the most unfishermanlike fishermen he had ever known and they were among the very best. They wore old straw hats, or were bareheaded. They wore old clothes and were sometimes barefooted and sometimes they wore shoes. You could tell a fisherman from a countryman, or *guajiro,* because the countrymen wore formalized pleated shirts, wide hats, tight trousers, and riding

boots when they came to town and nearly all of them carried machetes, while the fishermen wore the remnants of any old clothes they had and were cheerful, self-confident men. The country men were reserved and shy unless they were drinking. The only way you could tell a fisherman, surely, was by his hands. The hands of the old men were gnarled and brown, spotted with sun blotches, and the palms and fingers were deep cut and scarred by the hand lines. The young men's hands were not gnarled; but most of them had the sun blotches and they were all deeply scarred and the hair on the hands and arms of all but the very darkest men was bleached by the sun and the salt.

Thomas Hudson remembered how on this Christmas morning, the first Christmas of the war, the proprietor of the bar had asked him, "Do you want some shrimps?" and brought a big plate piled with fresh cooked prawns and put it on the bar while he sliced a yellow lime and spread the slices on a saucer. The prawns were huge and pink and their antennae hung down over the edge of the bar for more than a foot and he had picked one up and spread the long whiskers to their full width and remarked that they were longer than those of a Japanese admiral.

Thomas Hudson broke the head off the Japanese admiral prawn and then split open the belly of the shell with his thumbs and shucked the prawn out and it was so fresh and silky feeling under his teeth, and had such a flavor, cooked in sea water with fresh lime juice and whole black peppercorns, that he thought he had never eaten a better one; not even in Malaga nor in Tarragona nor in Valencia. It was then that the kitten came over to him, scampering down the bar, to rub against his hand and beg a prawn.

"They're too big for you, cotsie," he said. But he snipped off a piece of one with his thumb and finger and gave it to the kitten who ran with it back to the tobacco counter to eat it quickly and savagely.

Thomas Hudson looked at the kitten, with his handsome black

and white markings, his white chest and forelegs and the black, like a formal mask across his eyes and forehead, eating the prawn and growling, and asked the proprietor who he belonged to.

"You if you want him."

"I have two at the house. Persians."

"Two is nothing. Take this one. Give them a little Cojímar blood."

"Papa, can't we have him?" asked the one of his sons, that he did not think about any more, who had come up from the steps of the terrace where he had been watching the fishing boats come in, seeing the men unstep their masts, unload their coiled lines, and throw their fish ashore. "Please, papa, can't we have him? He's a beautiful cat."

"Do you think he'd be happy away from the sea?"

"Certainly, papa. He'll be miserable here in a little while. Haven't you seen how miserable the cats are in the streets? And they were probably just like him once."

"Take him," the proprietor said. "He'll be happy on a farm."

"Listen, Tomas," one of the fishermen who had been listening to the conversation from the table said. "If you want cats I can get an Angora, a genuine Angora, from Guanabacoa. A true Tiger Angora."

"Male?"

"As much as you," the fisherman said. At the table they all laughed.

Nearly all Spanish joking had that same base. "But with fur on them," the fisherman tried for another laugh and got it.

"Papa, can we please have this cat?" the boy asked. "This cat is a male."

"Are you sure?"

"I know, papa. I know."

"That's what you said about both the Persians."

"Persians are different, papa. I was wrong on the Persians and I admit it. But I know now, papa. Now I really know."

“Listen, Tomás. Do you want the Angora Tiger from Guanabacoa?” the fisherman asked.

“What is he? A witchcraft cat?”

“Witchcraft nothing. This cat never even heard of Saint Barbara. This cat is more of a Christian than you are.”

“Es muy posible,” another fisherman said and they all laughed.

“What does this famous beast cost?” Thomas Hudson asked.

“Nothing. He’s a gift. A genuine Angora Tiger. He’s a Christmas gift.”

“Come on up to the bar and have a drink and describe him to me.”

The fisherman came up to the bar. He wore horn rimmed glasses and a clean, faded, blue shirt that looked as though it would not stand another washing. It was lacy thin in back between the shoulders and the fabric was beginning to rip. He had on faded khaki trousers and was barefoot on Christmas. His face and hands were burned a dark wood color and he put his scarred hands on the bar and said to the proprietor, “Whisky with ginger ale.”

“Ginger ale makes me sick,” Thomas Hudson said. “Let me have one with mineral water.”

“It’s very good for me,” the fisherman said. “I like Canada Dry. Otherwise I don’t like the taste of the whisky. Listen, Tomás. This is a serious cat.”

“Papa,” the boy said, “before you and this gentleman start drinking, can we have this cat?”

He had tied a shrimp husk on the end of a piece of white cotton string and was playing with the kitten, who was standing on his hind legs, as a rampant lion does in heraldry, boxing with the lure the boy swung at him.

“Do you want him?”

“You know I want him.”

“You can have him.”

“Thank you very much, papa. I’m going to take him out to the

car to gentle him."

Thomas Hudson watched the boy cross the road with the kitten in his arms and get into the front seat with him. The top of the car was down and from the bar he watched the boy, his brown hair flattened by the wind, sitting in the convertible in the bright sunlight. He could not see the kitten because the boy was holding him on the seat, sitting low on the seat out of the wind, stroking the kitten.

Now the boy was gone and the kitten had grown into an old cat and had outlived the boy. The way he and Boise felt now, he thought, neither one wanted to outlive the other. I don't know how many people and animals have been in love before, he thought. It probably is a very comic situation. But I don't find it comic at all.

No, he thought, I do not find it comic any more than it is comic for a boy's cat to outlive him. Many things about it are certainly ridiculous, as Boise was when he growled and then made that sudden tragic cry and stiffened his whole length against the man. Sometimes, the servants said, he would not eat for several days after the man was gone but his hunger always drove him to it. Although there were days when he tried to live by his hunting and would not come in with the other cats, he always came in finally and he would leap out of the room over the backs of the other crowding cats when the door was opened by the servant that brought the tray of ground meat and then leap back in over all the other cats as they milled around the boy who had brought the food. He always ate very quickly and then wanted to leave the cat room as soon as he had finished. There was no cat that he cared for in any way.

For a long time now the man thought that Boise had regarded himself as a human being. He did not drink with the man as a bear would but he ate everything the man ate especially all of those things cats would not touch. Thomas Hudson remembered the summer before when they had been eating breakfast together and

he had offered Boise a slice of fresh, chilled mango. Boise had eaten it with delight and he had mango every morning as long as Thomas Hudson was ashore and the mango season lasted. He had to hold the slices for him so he could get them into his mouth since they were too slippery for the cat to pick off the plate and he thought he must rig some sort of a rack, like a toast rack, so the cat could take them without having to hurry.

Then when the alligator pear trees, the big, dark green *aguacates* with their fruit only a little darker and shinier than the foliage, had come into bearing this time when he had been ashore in September for overhaul, preparing to go down to Haiti, he had offered Boise a spoonful out of the shell, the hollow where the seed had been, filled with oil and vinegar dressing, and the cat had eaten it and then afterwards at each meal, he had eaten half an *aguacate.*

"Why don't you climb up in the trees and get them for yourself?" Thomas Hudson had asked the cat as they walked together over the hills of the property. But Boise, of course, had not answered.

He had found Boy up in an alligator pear tree one evening when he had gone out in the dusk to walk and see the flight of blackbirds going in toward Havana where they flew each night from all the countryside to the south and east, converging in long flights to roost, noisily, in the Spanish laurel trees of the Prado. Thomas Hudson liked to watch the blackbirds come flying over the hills and to see the first bats come out in the evening and the very small owls coming out for their night flying when the sun went down into the sea beyond Havana and the lights began to come on over the hills. On that night he had missed Boise, who nearly always walked with him, and he had taken Big Goats, one of Boise's sons, a big-shouldered, heavy-necked, wide-faced, tremendous-whiskered, black, fighting cat for the walk. Goats never hunted. He was a fighter and a stud cat and that kept him occupied. But he was cheerful, except where his work was concerned, and he liked to

walk especially if Thomas Hudson would stop every now and then and push him hard with his foot so that he would lie flat on his side. Thomas Hudson would then stroke the cat's belly with his foot. It was difficult to stroke Goats too hard or too roughly, and he would as soon be stroked with a shoe on as barefoot.

Thomas Hudson had just reached down and patted him—he liked to be patted as strongly as you would pat a big dog—when he looked up and saw Boise well up in the alligator pear tree. Goats looked up and saw him too.

"What are you doing, you old bastard?" Thomas Hudson called to him. "Have you finally started to eat them on the tree?"

Boise looked down at them and saw Goats.

"Come on down and we'll take a walk," Thomas Hudson told him. "I'll give you *aguacate* for supper."

Boise looked at Goats and said nothing.

"You look awfully handsome in those dark green leaves. Stay up if you want."

Boise looked away from them and Thomas Hudson and the big black cat went on through the trees.

"Do you think he's crazy, Goats?" the man asked. Then to please the cat he said, "Do you remember the night we couldn't find the medicine?"

Medicine was a magic word with Goats and as soon as he heard it, he lay on his side to be stroked.

"Remember the medicine?" the man asked him and the big cat writhed in his hardy rough delight.

Medicine had become a magic word with him one night when the man had been drunk, really drunk, and Boise would not sleep with him. Princessa would not sleep with him when he was drunk, nor would Willy. No one would sleep with him when he was drunk except Friendless, which was Big Goats' early name, and Friendless's Brother, who was really his sister, and who was an unfortunate cat who had many sorrows and occasional ecstasies.

Goats liked him drunk better than sober or, perhaps, it was because only when Thomas Hudson was drunk that Goats got to sleep with him that made it seem that way. But on this night Thomas Hudson had been ashore about four days when he got really drunk. It had started at noon at the Floridita and he had drunk first with Cuban politicians that had dropped in, nervous for a quick one; with sugar planters and rice planters; with Cuban government functionaries, drinking through their lunch hour; with second and third secretaries of Embassy, shepherding someone to the Floridita; with the inescapable FBI men, pleasant and all trying to look so average, clean-cut-young-American that they stood out as clearly as though they had worn a bureau shoulder patch on their white linen or seersucker suits. He had drunk double frozen daiquiris, the great ones that Constante made, that had no taste of alcohol and felt, as you drank them, the way downhill glacier skiing feels running through powder snow and, after the sixth and eighth, felt like downhill glacier skiing feels when you are running unroped. Some Navy that he knew came in and he drank with them and then with some of the then-called Hooligan Navy or Coast Guard. This was getting too near to shop, which he was drinking away from, so he went down to the far end of the bar where the old respectable whores were, the fine old whores that every resident drinker at the Floridita had slept with sometime in the last twenty years, and sat on a stool with them and had a club sandwich and drank more double frozens.

When he had come back to the farm that night he was very drunk and none of the cats would sleep with him but Goats, who was not allergic to the basic rum smell, had no prejudice against drunkenness, and revelled in the rich whore smell, as full-bodied as a fine Christmas fruitcake. They slept heavily together, Goats purring loudly whenever he woke, and finally Thomas Hudson, waking and remembering how much he had drunk, said to Goats, “We’ve got to take the medicine.”

Goats loved the sound of the word, which symbolized all this rich life he was sharing, and purred stronger than ever.

"Where is the medicine, Goats?" Thomas Hudson had asked.

He turned on the reading light by the bed but it was dead. In the storm that had kept him ashore, wires had blown down or been shorted and not yet repaired and there was no electricity. He felt on the night table by the bed for the big double Seconal capsule, the last one that he had, that would put him to sleep again and let him wake in the morning without a hangover. He knocked it off the table as he reached in the darkness and he couldn't find it. He felt all over the floor carefully and he couldn't find it. He had no matches by the bed because he was not smoking and the flashlight battery had been overused by the servants while he was away and was dead.

"Goats," he had said. "We have to find the medicine."

He had got out of bed and Goats came down on the floor, too, and they hunted for the medicine. Goats went under the bed, not knowing what he was hunting, but doing all he could, and Thomas Hudson said to him, "The medicine, Goats. Find the medicine."

Goats made whimpery cries under the bed and ranged all of the area. Finally he came out, purring, and Thomas Hudson, feeling over the floor, touched the capsule. It was dusty and cobwebby under his fingers. Goats had found it.

"You found the medicine," he had told Goats. "You wonder cat." After he had washed off the capsule in the palm of his hand with some water from the carafe by the bed and then swallowed it with a drink of water he lay, feeling it take hold slowly, and praised Goats, and the big cat purred at the praise and always afterwards medicine was a magic word to him.

At sea he used to think about Goats as well as Boise. But there was nothing tragic about Goats. Although he had been through some truly bad times he was absolutely entire and, even when he had been beaten in some of his most terrible fights, he was never

pitiful. Even when he had not been able to walk up to the house and lay under the mango tree below the terrace panting and soaked wet with sweat so you saw how big his shoulders were and how narrow and thin his flanks, lying there, too dead to move, trying to get the air into his lungs, he was never pitiful. He had the wide head of a lion and he was as unbeaten. Goats was fond of the man, and Thomas Hudson was fond of him and respected and loved him. But there was no question of Goats being in love with him or he in love with Goats as there had come to be with Boise.

Boise had simply become worse and worse. The night he and Goats had found Boise up in the *aguacate* tree, Boy had stayed out late and not come in when the man had gone to bed. He was sleeping in the big bed then in the bedroom at the far end of the house where there were big windows on all three sides of the room and the breeze blew through at nights. When he woke he listened to the noises of the night birds and he was awake and listening when he heard Boise leap up onto the window ledge. Boise was a very silent cat. But he called to the man as soon as he was on the window ledge and Thomas Hudson went to the screen and opened it. Boise leaped in. He had two fruit rats in his mouth.

In the moonlight that came in through the window, throwing the shadow of the trunk of the *ceiba* tree across the wide, white bed, Boise had played with the fruit rats. Leaping and turning, batting them along the floor, and then carrying one away to crouch and rush the other, he had played as wildly as when he was a kitten. Then he had carried them into the bathroom and after that Thomas Hudson had felt his weight as he jumped up on the bed.

“So you weren’t eating mangoes out of trees?” the man had asked him. Boise rubbed his head against him.

“So you were hunting and looking after the property? My old cat and brother Boise. Aren’t you going to eat them now you have them?”

Boise had only rubbed his head against the man and purred with

his silent purr and then, because he was tired from the hunt, he had gone to sleep. But he had slept restlessly and in the morning he had shown no interest in the dead fruit rats at all.

Now it was getting daylight and Thomas Hudson, who had not been able to sleep, watched the light come and the gray trunks of the royal palms show in the gray of the first light. First he saw only the trunks and the outline of their tops. Then, as the light was stronger, he could see the tops of the palms blowing in the gale and then, as the sun began to come up behind the hills, the palm trunks were whitish gray and their blowing branches a bright green and the grass of the hills was brown from the winter drought and the limestone tops of the far hills made them look as though they were crested with snow.

He got up from the floor and put on moccasins and an old mackinaw coat and, leaving Boise sleeping curled up on the blanket, walked through the living room into the dining room and out through it to the kitchen. The kitchen was in the north end of one wing of the house and the wind was wild outside, blowing the bare branches of the *fiamboyan* tree against the walls and the windows. There was nothing to eat in the icebox and the screened-in kitchen safe was empty of everything but condiments, a can of American coffee, a tin of Lipton's tea, and a tin of peanut oil for cooking. The Chinaman, who cooked, bought each day's supply of food in the market. They were not expecting Thomas Hudson back and the Chinaman had undoubtedly gone to the market already to buy the day's food for the servants. When one of the boys comes, Thomas Hudson thought, I'll send him into town for some fruit and eggs.

He boiled some water and made himself a pot of tea and took it and a cup and saucer back to the living room. The sun was up now and the room was bright and he sat in the big chair and drank the hot tea and looked at the pictures on the walls in the fresh, bright winter sunlight. Maybe I ought to change some of them, he thought.

The best ones are in my bedroom and I'm never in my bedroom any more.

From the big chair, the living room looked huge after being on the boat. He did not know how long the room was. He had known, when he had ordered the matting, but he had forgotten. However long it was, it seemed three times as long this morning. That was one of the things about being fresh ashore; that and that there was nothing in the icebox. The motion of the boat in the big confused sea the northwester had built up, blowing a gale across the heavy current, was all gone now. It was as far away from him now as the sea itself was. He could see the sea, looking through the open doors of the white room and out of the windows across the tree clumped hills cut by the highway, the farther bare hills that were the old fortifications of the town, the harbor, and the white of the town beyond. But the sea was only the blue beyond the far white spread of the town. It was as distant now as all things that were past and he meant to keep it that way, now that the motion was gone, until it was time to go out onto it again.

The Krauts can have it for the next four days, he thought. I wonder if the fish hang close under them and play around them when they are submerged in weather like this. I wonder how far down the motion goes. There are fish in these waters at any depth that they submerge to. The fish are probably very interested. Some of the submarine bottoms must be pretty foul and the fish would certainly fool around them. They are probably not foul much though on the schedules they run. The fish would be around them anyway. He thought a moment of the sea and how it would really be offshore today with the hills of blue water with the white blowing from their crests and then he put it away from him.

The cat, asleep on the blanket, woke as the man reached over and stroked him. He yawned and stretched his front legs, then curled up again.

"I never had a girl that waked when I did," the man said. "And

now I haven't even got a cat that does. Go on and sleep, Boy. It's a damned lie, anyway. I had a girl that woke when I did and even woke before I did. You never knew her, you've never known a woman that was any damn good. You had bad luck, Boise. The hell with it.

"You know what? We ought to have a good woman, Boy. We could both be in love with her. If you could support her you could have her. I've never seen one that could live on fruit rats very long, though."

The tea had dulled his hunger for a moment but now he was very hungry again. At sea he would have eaten a big breakfast an hour ago and probably had a mug of tea an hour before that. It had been too rough to cook on the run in and he had eaten a couple of corned beef sandwiches with thick slices of raw onion on them on the flying bridge. But he was very hungry now and he was irritated that there was nothing in the kitchen. I must buy some canned stuff and keep it here for coming in, he thought. But I'll have to get a cupboard with a lock to be sure they do not use it up and I hate to lock up food in a house.

Finally he poured himself a Scotch whisky and water and sat in the chair and read the accumulated daily papers and felt the drink soothe the hunger and ease the nervousness of being home. You can drink today if you want, he told himself. Once you've checked in. If it's this cold, there won't be many people at the Floridita. It will be good to be there again, though. He did not know whether to eat there or up at the Pacifico. It will be cold at the Pacifico, too, he thought. But I'll have a sweater and a coat and there is a table in the lee of the wall by the bar that will be out of the wind.

"I wish you liked to travel, Boy," he told the cat. "We could have a fine day in town."

Boise did not like to travel. He was terrified that it meant being taken to the vet's. He was still frightened of the veterinary surgeons. Goats would have made a good car cat, he thought. Probably would

have been a hell of a boat cat, too, except for the spraying. I ought to let them all out. I wish I could have brought them some sort of a present. I'll get catnip in town if there is any and get Goats and Willy and Boy drunk tonight on it. There still should be some catnip in the shelf of drawers of the cat room if it hasn't gotten too dry and lost its force. It lost its force very quickly in the tropics and the catnip that you raised in the garden had no force at all. I wish we non-cats had something that was as harmless as catnip that would have as much effect, he thought. Why don't we have something like that we can get drunk on?

The cats were very odd about catnip. Boise, Willy, Goats, Friendless's Brother, Littless, Furhouse, and Taskforce were all addicts. Princessa, which was the name the servants had given Baby, the blue Persian, would never touch catnip; neither would Uncle Woolfie, the gray Persian. With Uncle Woolfie, who was as stupid as he was beautiful, it could have been stupidity or insularity. Uncle Woolfie would never try anything new and would sniff cautiously at any new food until the other cats had taken it all and he was left with nothing. But Princessa, who was the grandmother of all the cats and was intelligent, delicate, high-principled, aristocratic, and most loving, was afraid of the odor of catnip and fled from it as though it were a vice. Princessa was such a delicate and aristocratic cat, smoke gray, with golden eyes and beautiful manners, and such a great dignity that her periods of being in heat were like an introduction to, and explanation and finally exposition of, all the scandals of royal houses. Since he had seen Princessa in heat, not the first tragic time, but after she was grown and beautiful, and so suddenly changed from all her dignity and poise into wantonness, Thomas Hudson knew that he did not want to die without having made love to a princess as lovely as Princessa.

She must be as grave and as delicate and as beautiful as Princessa before they were in love and made the love and then be

as shameless and as wanton in their bed as Princessa was. He dreamed about this princess sometimes in the nights and nothing that could ever happen could be any better than the dreams were but he wanted it actually and truly and he was quite sure he would have it if there were any such princess.

The trouble was that the only princess that he had ever made love to outside of Italian princesses, who did not count, was quite a plain girl with thickish ankles and not very good legs. She had a lovely northern skin, though, and shining well-brushed hair and he liked her face and her eyes and he liked her and her hand felt good in his hand when they stood by the rail going through the Canal coming up onto the lights of Ismailia. They liked each other very much and they were already close to being in love; close enough so that she had to be careful about the tone of their voices when they were with other people; and close enough so that, now, when they were holding each other's hands in the dark against the rail he could feel what there was between them with no doubt about it at all. Feeling this and being sure, he had spoken to her about it and had asked her something since they made a great thing about being completely frank with each other about everything.

"I would like to very much," she said. "As you know. But I cannot. As you know."

"But there is some way," Thomas Hudson had said. "There's always some way."

"You mean in a lifeboat?" she said. "I wouldn't want it in a lifeboat."

"Look," he said and he put his hand on her breast and felt it rise, alive, against his fingers.

"That is nice," she interrupted. "There are two of them you know."

"I know."

"That's very nice," she said. "You know I love you, Hudson. I just found out today."

“How?”

“Oh I just found out. It wasn’t terribly difficult. Didn’t you find out anything?”

“I didn’t have to find out anything,” he lied.

“That’s good,” she said. “But the lifeboat is no good. Your cabin is no good. My cabin is no good.”

“We could go to the Baron’s cabin.”

“There’s someone always in the Baron’s cabin. The wicked Baron. Isn’t it nice to have a wicked Baron just as in olden times?”

“Yes,” he said. “But I could make sure there would be no one there.”

“No. That’s no good. Just love me very hard now just the way you are. Feel that you love me all you can and do what you are doing.”

He did and then he did something else.

“No,” she said. “Don’t do that. I couldn’t stand that.”

She did something then and said, “Can you stand that?”

“Yes.”

“Good. I’ll hold there very good. No. Don’t kiss me. If you kiss me here on deck then we might as well have done everything else.”

“Why don’t we do everything else?”

“Where, Hudson? Where? Tell me in this life about where?”

“I’ll tell you about why.”

“I know all about why. Where is the problem.”

“I love you very much.”

“Oh yes. I love you, too. And no good will come of it, except we love each other which is good.”

He did something then and she said, “Please. If you do that have to go.”

“Let’s sit down.”

“No. Let’s stand up just as we are here.”

“Do you like what you are doing?”

“Yes. I love it. Do you mind?”

“No. But it doesn’t go on forever.”

“All right,” she said and she turned her head and kissed him quickly and then looked out again across the desert they were sliding by in the night. It was winter and the night was cool and they stood close together looking straight out. “You can do it, then. A mink coat is good for something finally in the tropics. You won’t before me?”

“No.”

“You promise?”

“Yes.”

“Oh Hudson. Please. Please now.”

“You?”

“Oh yes. Any time with you. Now. Now. Oh yes. Now.”

“Really now?”

“Oh yes. Believe me now.”

Afterwards they stood there and the lights were much closer and the bank of the canal and the distance beyond was still sliding by.

“Now are you ashamed of me?” she asked.

“No. I love you very much.”

“But it’s bad for you and I was selfish.”

“No. I don’t think it is bad for me. And you’re not selfish.”

“Don’t think it was a waste. It wasn’t a waste. Truly not for me.”

“Then it wasn’t a waste. Kiss me, will you?”

“No. I can’t. Just hold your hand against me tight.”

Later she said, “You don’t mind how fond I am of him?”

“No. He’s very proud.”

“Let me tell you a secret.”

She told him a secret that did not come to him as a great surprise.

“Is that very wicked?”

“No,” he said. “That’s jolly.”

“Oh Hudson,” she said. “I love you very much. Please go and make yourself comfortable in every way and then come back to me

here. Should we have a bottle of champagne at the Ritz?"

"That would be lovely. What about your husband?"

"He's still playing bridge. I can see him through the window. After he finishes he will look for us and join us."

So they had gone to the Ritz which was at the stern of the ship and had a bottle of Perrier-Jouet Brut 1915 and then another one and after a while the Prince had joined them. The Prince was very nice and Hudson liked him. They had been hunting in East Africa, as he had been, and he had met them at the Muthaiga Club and at Torr's in Nairobi and they had taken the same boat from Mombasa. The ship was a round-the-world cruise ship which made a stop at Mombasa en route for Suez, the Mediterranean, and eventually Southampton. It was a super luxury ship where all the cabins were private suites. It had been sold out for the world cruise as ships were in those years but some of the passengers had left the ship in India and one of those men who know about everything had told Thomas Hudson in the Muthaiga Club that the ship was coming in with several vacancies and that passage on her might be had quite reasonably. He had told the Prince and Princess, who had not enjoyed flying out to Kenya in those times when the Handley Pages were so slow and the flight so long and tiresome, and they had been delighted with the idea of the trip and the rates.

"We'll have such a jolly trip and you're a wonderful chap to have found out about it," the Prince had said. "I'll ring them up about it in the morning."

It had been a jolly trip, too, with the Indian Ocean blue and the ship coming out slowly from the new harbor and then Africa was behind them, and the old white town with the great trees and all the green behind it, then the sea breaking on the long reef as they passed and then the ship gained speed and was in the open ocean and flying fish were splitting out of the water and ahead of the ship. Africa dropped to a long blue line behind them and a steward was beating on a gong and he and the Prince and the Princess and the

Baron, who was an old friend and lived out there and was really wicked, were having a dry martini in the bar.

"Pay no attention to that gong and we'll lunch in the Ritz," the Baron said. "Do you agree?"

He had not slept with the Princess on the ship although by the time they had reached Haifa they had done so many other things that they had both reached a sort of ecstasy of desperation that was so intense that they should have been required by law to sleep with each other until they could not stand it another time simply for the relief of their nerves, if for no other reason. Instead, from Haifa they made a motor trip to Damascus. On the way up, Thomas Hudson sat in the front seat with the chauffeur and the two of them sat in back. Thomas Hudson saw a small part of the Holy Land and a small part of the T. E. Lawrence country and many cold hills and much desert on the way up, and on the way back they sat in the back and the Prince sat in front with the chauffeur. Thomas Hudson saw the back of the Prince's head and the back of the chauffeur's head on the return trip and he remembered now that the road from Damascus to Haifa, where the ship was anchored in the harbor, runs down a river. There is a steep gorge in the river but it is very small as it would be on a small-scale relief map and in the gorge there is an island. He remembered the island better than anything on the trip.

The trip to Damascus did not help much and when they had left Haifa and the ship was headed out across the Mediterranean and they were up on the boat deck, that was cold now with a northeast wind, that was making a sea that the ship was beginning to buck slowly, she said to him, "We have to do something."

"Do you like understatement?"

"No. I want to go to bed and stay in it for a week."

"A week doesn't sound very long."

"A month then. But we have to do it right away and right away we can't."

"We can go down to the Baron's cabin."

“No. I do not want to do it until we can do it really without worrying.”

“How do you feel now?”

“As though I were going crazy and were already quite a way there . . .”

“In Paris we can make love in a bed.”

“But how do I get away? I have no experience of how to get away.”

“You go shopping.”

“But I have to go shopping with someone.”

“You can go shopping with someone. Have you no one you can trust?”

“Oh yes. But I so much did not want to ever have to do that.”

“Don’t do it then.”

“No. I must. I know I must. But that does not make it better.”

“Were you never unfaithful to him before?”

“No. And I thought I never would be. But now it is all that I want to do. But it hurts me that anyone should know.”

“We’ll figure out something.”

“Please put your arm around me and hold me very close against you,” she said. “Please let us not talk, nor think, nor worry. Please just hold your arm tight and love me very much because I ache now everywhere.”

After a while he had said to her, “Look, whenever you do this it is going to be as bad for you as now. You don’t want to be unfaithful and you don’t want anyone to know. But it will be like that whenever it happens.”

“I want to do it. But I don’t want to hurt him. I have to do it. It’s not in my hands anymore.”

“Then do it. Now.”

“But it’s terribly dangerous now.”

“Do you think there is anyone on this ship that sees us and hears us and knows us that thinks we have not slept together? Do you

think the things we have done are any different from that?"

"Oh, of course they are different. There is all the difference. We couldn't have a baby from what we have done."

"You're wonderful," he had said. "You really are."

"But if we have a baby I'll be glad. He wants a baby very much and we never have one. I'll sleep with him right away and he'll never know it is ours."

"I wouldn't sleep with him *right* away."

"No I suppose not. But the next night."

"How long since you slept with him?"

"Oh I sleep with him every night. I have to, Hudson. I get so excited I have to. I think that's one reason he plays bridge until so late now. He'd like me to be asleep when he comes in. I think he is getting a little tired since we have been in love."

"Is this the first time you have ever been in love since you married him?"

"No. I am sorry. But it is not. I have been in love several times. But I have never been unfaithful to him or even considered it. He is so good and nice and such a good husband and I like him so much and he loves me and is always kind to me."

"I think we had better go down to the Ritz and have some champagne," Thomas Hudson had said. His feelings were becoming very mixed.

The Ritz was deserted and a waiter brought them the wine at one of the tables against the wall. They kept the Perrier-Jouet Brut (1915) on ice all of the time now and simply asked, "The same wine, Mr. Hudson?"

They raised their glasses to each other and the Princess said, "I love this wine. Don't you?"

"Very much."

"What are you thinking about?"

"You."

"Naturally. All I think about is you. But what about me?"

“I was thinking we should go down to my cabin now. We talk too much and fool around too much and do nothing. What time have you?”

“Ten after eleven.”

“What time have you?” he called to the wine steward.

“Eleven-fifteen, sir.” The steward looked at the clock inside the bar.

When the steward was out of earshot, he asked, “How late will he play bridge?”

“He said he would play late and for me not to stay awake for him.”

“We’ll finish the wine and go to the cabin. I have some there.”

“But Hudson, it is very dangerous.”

“It will always be dangerous,” Thomas Hudson had said. “But not doing it is getting to be a damned sight more dangerous.”

That night he made love to her three times and when he took her to her cabin, she had said that he shouldn’t and he had said it would look much sounder if he did, the Prince was still playing bridge. Thomas Hudson had gone back to the Ritz, where the bar was still open, and ordered another bottle of the same wine and read the papers that had come aboard at Haifa. He realized that it was the first time he had had time to read the papers in a long time and he felt very relaxed and very happy to be reading the papers. When the bridge game broke up and the Prince came by and looked into the Ritz, Thomas Hudson asked him to have a glass of wine before he went to bed and he liked the Prince more than ever and felt a strong kinship with him.

He and the Baron had got off the ship at Marseilles. Most of the others were going on for the rest of the cruise, which finished at Southampton. In Marseilles he and the Baron were sitting at a sidewalk restaurant in the Vieux Port eating *moules marinés* and drinking a carafe of *vin rosé.* Thomas Hudson was very hungry and he remembered that he had been hungry most of the time ever

since they had left Haifa.

He was damned hungry now, too, he thought. Where the hell were those servants? At least one should have shown up. It was blowing colder than ever outside. It reminded him of the cold day there on the steep street in Marseilles that ran down to the port, sitting at the café table with their coat collars up eating the *moules* out of the thin black shells you lifted from the hot, peppery milk broth with hot melted butter floating in it, drinking the wine from Tavel that tasted the way Provence looked, and watching the wind blow the skirts of the fisherwomen, the cruise passengers and the ill-dressed whores of the port as they climbed the steep cobbled street with the mistral lashing at them.

"You have been a very naughty boy," the Baron had said.

"Very naughty indeed."

"Do you want some more *moules?"*

"No. I want something solid."

"Shouldn't we have a *bouillabaisse,* too?"

"Two soups?"

"I'm hungry. And we won't be here again for a long time."

"I should think you might be hungry. Good. We'll have a *bouillabaisse* and then a good *Châteaubriand* very rare. I'll build you up, you bastard."

"What are you going to do?"

"The question is what are you going to do. Do you love her?"

"No."

"That's much better. It is better for you to leave now. Much better."

"I promised to spend some time with them for the fishing."

"If it were the shooting it might be worthwhile," the Baron had said. "The fishing is very cold and very unpleasant and she has no business to make a fool of her husband."

"He must know about it."

"He does not. He knows she is in love with you. That is all. You

are a gentleman so whatever you do is all right. But she has no business to make a fool of her husband. You wouldn't marry her, would you?"

"No."

"She couldn't marry you anyway and there is no need that he should be made unhappy unless you are in love with her."

"I'm not. I know that now."

"Then I think you should get out."

"I'm quite sure that I should."

"I'm so glad that you agree. Now tell me truly, how is she?"

"She's very well."

"Don't be silly. I knew her mother. You should have known her mother."

"I'm sorry I didn't."

"You should be. I don't know how you got yourself mixed up with such good dull people. You don't need her for your painting or anything like that, do you?"

"No. That's not the way it's done. I like her very much. I still like her. But I'm not in love with her and it's getting very complicated."

"I'm so glad that you agree. Now where do you think that you will go?"

"We've just come from Africa."

"Exactly. Why don't you go to Cuba for a while or the Bahamas? I could join you if I get hold of any money at home."

"Do you think you will get any money at home?"

"No."

"I think I will stay in Paris for a while. I've been away from town for a long time."

"Paris isn't town. London is town."

"I'd like to see what's going on in Paris."

"I can tell you what's going on."

"No. I mean I want to see the pictures and some people and go to the Six-Day and Auteuil and Enghien and Le Tremblay. Why

don't you stay?"

"I don't like racing and I can't afford to gamble."

And why go on with that? he thought now. The Baron was dead and the Krauts had Paris and the Princess did not have a baby. There would be no blood of his in any royal house, he thought, unless he had a nosebleed sometime in Buckingham Palace, which seemed extremely unlikely. If one of those boys did not come in twenty minutes, he decided, he would go down into the village and get some eggs and some bread. It is a hell of a thing to be hungry in your own house, he thought. But I'm too damned tired to go down there.

Just then he heard someone in the kitchen and he pushed the buzzer that was set in the underside of the big table and heard it burr twice in the kitchen.

The second houseboy came in with his faintly fairy, half Saint Sebastian, sly, crafty, and long-suffering look and said, "You rang?"

"What the hell do you think I did? Where is Mario?"

"He went for the mail."

"How are all the cats?"

"Very well. Without news. Big Goats fought with El Gordo. But we treated the wounds."

"Boise looks thin."

"He goes out much at night."

"How is Princessa?"

"She was a little sad. But she eats well now."

"Did you have difficulty getting meat?"

"We got it from Cotorro."

"How are the dogs?"

"All of them are well. Negrita is with puppies again."

"Couldn't you keep her shut up?"

"We tried but she escaped."

"Has anything else happened?"

"Nothing. How was the voyage?"

"Without incident."

As he talked, irritated and short as always with this boy who he had let go twice but had taken back each time when his father had come and pled for him, Mario, the first houseboy, came in carrying the papers and the mail. He was smiling and his brown face was gay and kind and loving.

"How was the voyage?"

"A little rough at the end."

"Figúrate. Imagine it. It's a big norther. Have you eaten?"

"There's nothing to eat."

"I brought eggs and the milk and bread. *Tú,*" he said to the second houseboy. "Go in and prepare the caballero's breakfast. How do you want the eggs?"

"As usual."

"Los huevos como siempre," Mario said. "Was Boise there to meet you?"

"Yes."

"He has suffered very much this time. More than ever."

"And the others?"

"Only one bad fight between Goats and Fats." He used the English names proudly. "The Princessa was a little sad. But it was nothing."

"*¿Y tú?*"

"Me?" He smiled shyly and very pleased. "Very well. Thank you very much."

"And the family?"

"All very well, thank you. Papa is working again."

"I am glad."

"He is, too. Did none of the other gentlemen sleep here?"

"No. They all went into town."

"They must be tired."

"They are."

"There were calls from various friends. I have them all written

down. I hope you can recognize them. I can do nothing with the English names."

"Write them as they sound."

"But they do not sound the same to me as to you."

"Did the Colonel call?"

"No sir."

"Bring me a whisky with mineral water," Thomas Hudson said. "And bring milk for the cats, please."

"In the dining room or here?"

"The whisky here. The milk for the cats in the dining room."

"Instantly," Mario said. He went to the kitchen and came back with a whisky and mineral water. "I think it is strong enough," he said.

Should I shave now or wait until after breakfast? Thomas Hudson thought. I ought to shave. That's what I ordered the whisky for, to get me through the shaving. All right, go in and shave then. The hell with it, he thought. No. Go in and do it. It's good for your damned morale and you have to go into town after breakfast.

Shaving, he sipped the drink halfway through lathering, after lathering, and during the process of relathering, and changing blades three times in getting the two-week stubble off his cheeks, chin, and throat. The cat walked around and watched him while he shaved and rubbed against his legs. Then suddenly he bounded out of the room and Thomas Hudson knew he had heard the milk bowls being put down on the tiled floor of the dining room. He had not heard the click himself nor had he heard any calling. But Boise had heard it.

Thomas Hudson finished shaving and poured his right hand full of the wonderful ninety-degree pure alcohol that was as cheap in Cuba as miserable rubbing alcohol in the States and doused it over his face, feeling its cold bite take away the soreness from the shaving.

I don't use sugar, nor smoke tobacco, he thought, but by God I

get my pleasure out of what they distill in this country.

The lower parts of the bathroom windows were painted over because the stone paved patio ran all around the house, but the upper halves of the windows were of clear glass and he could see the branches of the palm trees whipping in the wind. She's blowing even heavier than I thought. There would almost be time to haul out. But you can't tell. It all depends on what she does when she goes into the northeast. It certainly had been fun not to think about the sea for the last few hours. Let's keep it up, he thought. Let's not think about the sea nor what is on it or under it, or anything connected with it. Let's not even make a list of what we will not think of about it. Let's not think of it at all. Let's just have the sea in being and leave it at that. And the other things, he thought. We won't think about them either.

"Where would the senor like to have breakfast?" Mario asked.

"Any place away from the *puta* sea."

"In the living room or in the señor's bedroom?"

"In the bedroom. Pull out the wicker chair and put the breakfast on a table by it."

He drank the hot tea and ate a fried egg and some toast with orange marmalade.

"Is there no fruit?"

"Only bananas."

"Bring some."

"Are they not bad with alcohol?"

"That is superstition."

"But while you were away a man died in the village from eating bananas when he was drinking rum."

"How do you know he wasn't just a banana-eating rummy who died from rum?"

"No, señor. This man died very suddenly from drinking a small amount of rum after eating a large quantity of bananas. They were his own bananas from his garden. He lived on the hill behind the

village and worked for the route number seven of the buses."

"May he rest in peace," Thomas Hudson said. "Bring me a few bananas."

Mario brought the bananas, small, yellow, ripe, from the tree in the garden. They were hardly bigger, peeled, than a man's fingers and they were delicious. Thomas Hudson ate five of them.

"Observe me for symptoms," he said. "And bring the Princessa to eat the other egg."

"I gave her an egg to celebrate your return," the boy said. "I also gave an egg to Boise and to Willy."

"What about Goats?"

"The gardener said it was not good for Goats to eat much until his wounds are healed. His wounds were severe."

"What sort of a fight was it?"

"It was very serious. They fought for nearly a mile. We lost them in the thorn brush beyond the garden. They fought with no noise at all; the way they fight now. I don't know who won. Big Goats came in first and we took care of his wounds. He came to the patio and lay beside the cistern. He couldn't jump to the top of it. Fats came in an hour later and we cared for his wounds."

"Do you remember how loving they were when they were brothers?"

"Of course. But I am afraid now that Fats will kill Goats. He must weigh nearly a pound more."

"Goats is a great fighting cat."

"Yes, señor. But figure out for yourself what a full pound means."

"I don't think it can mean as much in cats as it does in fighting cocks. You think of everything in terms of fighting chickens. It doesn't mean much in men unless one man must weaken himself to make the weight. Jack Dempsey weighed only 185 pounds when he won the championship of the world. Willard weighed 230. Goats and Fats are both big cats."

“The way they fight, a pound is a terrible advantage,” Mario said. “If they were being fought for money, no one would give away a pound. They would not give away ounces.”

“Bring me some more bananas.”

“Please, señor.”

“You really believe that nonsense?”

“It’s not nonsense, señor.”

“Then bring me another whisky and mineral water.”

“If you order me to.”

“I ask you to.”

“If you ask, it is an order.”

“Then bring it.”

The boy brought in the whisky with ice and cold, charged mineral water and Thomas Hudson took it and said, “Observe me for symptoms.” But the worried look on the boy’s dark face made him tire of the teasing and he said, “Truly, I know it will not make me sick.”

“The señor knows what he is doing. But it was my duty to protest.”

“That’s all right. You’ve protested. Has Pedro come yet?”

“No, señor.”

“When he comes tell him to have the Cadillac ready to go to town at once.”

Now you take a bath, Thomas Hudson said to himself. Then you dress for Havana. Then you ride into town to see the Colonel. What the hell is wrong with you? Plenty is wrong with me, he thought. Plenty. The land of plenty. The sea of plenty. The air of plenty.

He sat in the wicker chair with his feet up on the extension that pulled out from under the seat and looked at the pictures on the wall of his bedroom. At the head of the bed, the cheap bed with the no-good mattress that had been bought as an economy because he never slept in it except in case of quarrels, there was Juan Gris’s *Guitar Player. Nostalgia hecha hombre,* he thought in Spanish. People

did not know that you died of it. Across the room, above the bookcase, was Paul Klee's *Monument in Arbeit.* He didn't love it as he loved the *Guitar Player* but he loved to look at it and he remembered how corrupt it had seemed when he first bought it in Berlin. The color was as indecent as the plates in his father's medical books that showed the different types of chancres and venereal ulcers, and how frightened of it his wife had been until she had learned to accept its corruption and only see it as a painting. He knew no more about it now than when he first saw it in Flechtheim's Gallery in the house by the river that wonderful cold fall in Berlin when they had been so happy. But it was a good picture and he liked to look at it.

Above the other bookcase was one of Masson's forests. This was Ville d'Avray and he loved it the way he loved the *Guitar Player*. That was the great thing about pictures; you could love them with no hopelessness at all. You could love them without sorrow and the good ones made you happy because they had done what you always tried to do. So it was done and it was all right, even if you failed to do it.

Boise came into the room and jumped up onto his lap. He jumped beautifully and could leap, without effort showing, to the top of the high chest of drawers in the big bedroom. Now, having leaped moderately and neatly, he settled down on Thomas Hudson's lap and made loving pushes with his forepaws.

"I'm looking at the pictures, Boy. You'd be better off if you liked pictures."

Who knows though but he may get as much from leaping and from night hunting as I get from the pictures, Thomas Hudson thought. It is a damned shame he can't see them though. You can't tell. He might have frightful taste in pictures.

"I wonder who you'd like, Boy. Probably the Dutch period when they painted such wonderful still lifes of fish and oysters and game. Hey, layoff me there. This is the day time. You're not supposed to

do that sort of thing in the day time."

Boise continued with his lovemaking and Thomas Hudson pushed him onto his side to quiet him.

"You have to observe a few decencies, Boy," he said. "I haven't even gone out to see the other cats, to please you."

Boise was happy and Thomas Hudson felt the purr in his throat with his fingers.

"I have to bathe, Boy. You spend half your time doing that. But you do it with your own tongue. That's when you won't pay any attention to me. When you wash yourself you're just like a damned businessman at his office. That's business. That's not to be interrupted. Well, I have to bathe now. But instead I sit here drinking in the morning like a damned rummy. That's one of the differences between us. You couldn't steer eighteen hours either. I can, though. Twelve anytime. Eighteen when I have to. Nineteen yesterday and this morning. But I can't jump and I can't hunt at night like you. We do some pretty damn fancy hunting at night though. But you've got your radar in your whiskers. And a pigeon probably has his Huff Duff in that incrustation above his beak. Anyway, all homing pigeons have the incrustation. What sort of ultrahigh frequencies have you got, Boy?"

Boise lay there heavy and solid and long, purring silently and very happy.

"What does your search receiver say, Boy? What's your pulse width? What's your pulse repetition frequency? I've got a magnetron built in. But don't tell anybody. But with the consequent higher resolution attained by the UHF, enemy whores can be detected at a greater distance. It's microwave, Boy, and you're purring it right now."

So that's how you kept your resolution not to think about it until we get going again. It wasn't the sea you wanted to forget. You know you love the sea and would not be anywhere else. Go on out to the porch and look at her. She is not cruel or callous nor any of

that *Quatsch.* She is just there and the wind moves her and the current moves her and they fight on her surface but down below none of it matters. Be thankful that you are going out on her again and thank her for being your home. She is your home. Don't talk nor think nonsense about her. She is not your trouble. You're making a little more sense, he told himself. Although you don't make too damned much ashore. All right, he told himself. I have to make so much sense at sea that I don't want to make any ashore.

Ashore is a lovely place, he thought. Today we would see just how lovely it could be. After I see the goddamnned Colonel, he thought. Well I always enjoy seeing him because it builds up my morale. Let's not go into the Colonel, he thought. That's one of those things we are going to skip while we have a lovely day. I will go to see him. But I won't go into him. Enough has gone into him already that will never get out. And enough has gone out of him that they will never get back in. So I thought you weren't going to go into him. I'm not. I'm just going in to see him and report.

He finished the drink, lifted the cat off his lap, stood up and looked at the three paintings, and then went in and took a shower. The water heater had only been on since the boys came in the morning and there was not much hot water. But he soaped himself clean, scrubbed his head, and finished off with cold water. He dressed in white flannel shirt, dark tie, flannel slacks, wool socks and his ten-year-old English brogues, a cashmere pullover sweater, and an old tweed jacket. He rang for Mario.

"Is Pedro here?"

"Yes, señor. He has the car outside."

"Make me a Tom Collins with coconut water and bitters to take. Put it in one of the cork holders."

"Yes, señor. Don't you want a coat?"

"I'll take a coat to wear back if it gets cold."

"Will you be back for lunch?"

"No. Nor for dinner."

“Do you want to see any of the cats before you go? They are all out in the lee of the wind in the sun.”

“No. I will see them tonight. I want to bring them a present.”

“I go to make the drink. It will take a moment for the coconut.”

Now why in hell wouldn’t you go to see the cats? he asked himself. I don’t know, he answered. That one I did not understand at all. That was a new one.

Boise was following him, a little worried at this going away, but not panicky since there was no baggage and no packing. “Maybe I did it for you, Boy,” Thomas Hudson said. “Don’t you worry. I’ll be back sometime tonight or in the morning. With my ashes dragged, I hope. Properly, I hope. Then maybe we will make a little better sense around here. *Vámonos a limpiar la escopeta.”*

He came out of the long, bright living room that still seemed enormous and down the stone steps into the even greater brightness of the Cuban winter morning. The dogs played around his legs and the sad pointer came up grovelling and wagging his lowered head.

“You poor miserable beast,” he said to the pointer. He patted him and the dog fawned on him. The other mongrel dogs were gay and prancing in the excitement of the cold and the wind. There were some dead branches broken off the *ceiba* tree that grew out of the patio and they lay on the steps where they had fallen in the wind. The chauffeur came from behind the car, shivering exaggeratedly, and said, “Good morning, Mr. Hudson. How was the voyage?”

“Good enough. How are the cars?”

“All in perfect shape.”

“I’ll bet,” Thomas Hudson said in English. Then to Mario, who came out of the house and down the steps to the car carrying the tall, dark, rusty-colored drink, wrapped round with a sheet of moulded cork that came to within a half-inch of the rim of the glass, “Get a sweater for Pedro. One of those that buttons in front. From Mr. Tom’s clothes. See that the steps are cleaned of this

trash."

Thomas Hudson handed the drink to the chauffeur to hold and stooped to pet the dogs. Boise was sitting on the steps, watching them with contempt. There was Negrita, a small black bitch going gray with age, her tail curled over her back, her tiny feet and delicate legs almost sparkling as she played, her muzzle as sharp as a fox terrier and her eyes loving and intelligent.

He had seen her one night in a bar following some people out and asked what breed of dog she was.

"Cuban," the waiter said. "She's been here four days. She follows everyone out but they always shut the doors of their cars on her."

They had taken her home to the Finca and for two years she had not been in heat and Thomas Hudson had thought she was too old to breed. Then, one day, he had to break her loose from a police dog and after that she had police dog pups, pups from a pit bull, pointer pups, and a wonderful unknown pup that was bright red and looked as though his father might have been an Irish setter except that he had the chest and shoulders of a pit bull and a tail that curled up over his back like Negrita's.

Now her sons were all around her and she was pregnant again.

"Who did she breed with?" Thomas Hudson asked the chauffeur.

"I don't know."

Mario, who came out with the sweater and gave it to the chauffeur, who took off his frayed uniform coat to put it on, said, "The father is the fighting dog in the village."

"Well, goodbye, dogs," Thomas Hudson said. "So long, Boy," he said to the cat who came bounding down through the dogs to the car. Thomas Hudson, sitting in the car now, holding the cork-wrapped drink, leaned out of the window and touched the cat who rose on his hind legs to push his head against his fingers. "Don't worry, Boy. I'll be back."

"Poor Boise," Mario said. He picked him up and held him in his arms and the cat looked after the car as it turned, circling the

flower bed, and went down the uneven gully-washed driveway until it was hidden by the hill slope and the tall mango trees. Then Mario took the cat into the house and put him down and the cat jumped up onto the window sill and continued to look out at where the driveway disappeared under the hill.

Mario stroked him but the cat did not relax.

"Poor Boise," the tall Negro boy said. "Poor, poor Boise."

In the car Thomas Hudson and the chauffeur went down the driveway and the chauffeur jumped out and unchained the gate and then climbed back in and drove the car through. A Negro boy was coming up the street and he called to him to close the gate and the boy grinned and nodded his head.

"He is a younger brother of Mario."

"I know," Thomas Hudson said.

They rolled through the squalor of the village side street and turned onto the Central Highway. They passed the houses of the village, the two grocery stores open onto the street with their bars and rows of bottles flanked by shelves of canned goods, and then were past the last bar and the huge Spanish laurel tree whose branches spread all the way across the road and were rolling downhill on the old stone highway. The highway ran downhill for three miles with big old trees on either side. There were nurseries, small farms, large farms with their decrepit Spanish colonial houses that were being cut up into subdivisions, their old hilly pastures being cut by streets that ended at grassy hillsides, the grass brown from the drought. The only green now on the land, in this country of so many greens, was along the watercourses where the royal palms grew tall and gray, their green tops slanted by the wind. This was a dry norther, dry, hard, and cold. The Straits of Florida had been chilled by the other northers that had come before it and there was no fog and no rain with this wind.

Thomas Hudson took a sip of the ice-cold drink that tasted of the fresh green lime juice mixed with the tasteless coconut water

that was still so much more full-bodied than any charged water, strong with the real Gordon's gin that made it alive to his tongue and rewarding to swallow, and all of it tautened by the bitters that gave it color. It tastes as good as a drawing sail feels, he thought. It is a hell of a good drink.

The cork glassholder kept the ice from melting and weakening the drink and he held it fondly in his hand and looked at the country as they drove into town.

"Why don't you coast down here and save gas?"

"I will if you say," the chauffeur answered. "But this is government gas."

"Coast for the practice," Thomas Hudson said. "Then you will know how to do it when it is our gas and not the government's."

They were down on the flat now where flower-growers' fields ran off the left and on the right were the houses of the basket-weavers.

"I must get a basketweaver to come up and mend the big mat in the living room where it is worn."

"Sí, señor."

"Do you know one?"

"Sí, señor."

The chauffeur, whom Thomas Hudson disliked very much for his general misinformation and stupidity, his conceit, his lack of understanding of motors, and his atrocious care of the cars and general laziness, was being very short and formal because of the reprimand about coasting. With all his faults he was a splendid driver, that is, he was an excellent car handler with beautiful reflexes in the illogical and neurotic Cuban traffic. Also he knew too much about their operations to be fired.

"Are you warm enough with the sweater?"

"Sí, señor."

The hell with you, Thomas Hudson thought. You keep that up and I'll ream you out good.

"Was it very cold in your house last night?"

"It was terrible. It was *horroroso.* You can't imagine it, Mr. Hudson."

Peace had been made and they were now crossing the bridge, where the trunk of the girl who had once been cut into six pieces by her policeman lover and the pieces wrapped in brown paper and scattered along the Central Highway, had been found. The river was dry now. But on that evening it had been running with water and cars had been lined up for half a mile in the rain while their drivers stared at the historic spot.

The next morning the papers published photographs of the torso on their front pages and one news story pointed out that the girl was undoubtedly a North American tourist since no one of that age living in the tropics could be so undeveloped physically. How they had already arrived at her exact age Thomas Hudson never knew since the head was not discovered until sometime later in the fishing port of Batabano. But the torso, as shown in the front pages, did fall rather short of the best fragments of Greek sculpture. She was not an American tourist, though; and it turned out that she had developed whatever attractions she had in the tropics. But for a while Thomas Hudson had to give up doing any road work in the country outside the Finca because anybody seen running or even hurrying, was in danger of being pursued by the populace crying, "There he goes! That's him! That's the man who chopped her up!"

Now they were over the bridge and going up the hill into Luyano where there was a view, off to the left, of El Cerro that always reminded Thomas Hudson of Toledo. Not El Greco's Toledo. But a part of Toledo itself seen from a side hill. They were coming up on it now as the car climbed the last of the hill and he saw it again clearly and it was Toledo all right, just for a moment, and then the hill dipped and Cuba was close on either side.

This was the part he did not like on the road into town.

This was really the part he carried the drink for. I drink against

poverty, dirt, four-hundred-year-old dust, the nose-snot of children, cracked palm fronds, roofs made from hammered tins, the shuffle of untreated syphilis, sewage in the old beds of brooks, lice on the bare necks of infested poultry, scale on the backs of old men's necks, the smell of old women, and the full-blast radio, he thought. It is a hell of a thing to do. I ought to look at it closely and do something about it. Instead you have your drink the way they carried smelling salts in the old days. No. Not quite that, he thought. Sort of a combination of that and the way they drank in Hogarth's *Gin Lane.* You're drinking against going in to see the Colonel, too, he thought. You're always drinking against something or for something now, he thought. The hell you are. Lots of times you are just drinking. You are going to do quite a lot of it today.

He took a long sip of the drink and felt it clean and cold and fresh-tasting in his mouth. This was the worst part of the road where the street car line ran and the traffic was bumper to bumper on the level crossing of the railroad when the gates were down. Ahead now beyond the lines of stalled cars and trucks was the hill with the castle of Atares where they had shot Colonel Crittenden and the others when that expedition failed down at Bahia Honda forty years before he was born and where they had shot one hundred and twenty-two American volunteers against that hill. Beyond, the smoke blew straight across the sky from the tall chimneys of the Havana Electric Company and the highway ran on the old cobblestones under the viaduct, parallel to the upper end of the harbor where the water was as black and greasy as the pumpings from the bottoms of the tanks of an oil tanker. The gates came up and they moved again and now they were in the lee of the norther and the wooden-hulled ships of the pitiful and grotesque wartime merchant marine lay against the creosoted pilings of the wooden docks and the scum of the harbor lay along their sides blacker than the creosote of the pilings and foul as an uncleaned sewer.

He recognized various craft that he knew. One, an old barque, had been big enough for a sub to bother with and the sub had shelled her. She was loaded with timber and was coming in for a cargo of sugar. Thomas Hudson could still see where she had been hit, although she was repaired now, and he remembered the live Chinamen and the dead Chinamen on her deck when they had come alongside her at sea. I thought you weren't going to think about the sea today.

I have to look at it, he said to himself. Those that are on it are a damned sight better off than those that live in what we have just been riding through. This harbor that has been fouled for three or four hundred years isn't the sea anyway. And this harbor isn't bad out by the mouth. Nor even so bad over by the Casablanca side. You've known good nights in this harbor and you know it.

"Look at that," he said. The chauffeur, seeing him looking, started to stop the car. But he told him to go on. "Keep going to the Embassy," he said.

He had looked at the old couple that lived in the board and palm frond lean-to they had built against the wall that separated the railway track from a tract of ground where the electric company stored coal they unloaded from the harbor. The wall was black with coal dust from the coal that was hauled overhead on the unloader and it was less than four feet from the roadbed of the railway. The lean-to was built at a steep slant and there was barely room for two people to lie down in it. The couple who lived in it were sitting in the entrance cooking coffee in a tin can. They were Negroes, filthy, scaly with age and dirt, wearing clothing made from old sugar sacks, and they were very old. He could not see the dog.

"¿Y el perro?" he asked the chauffeur.

"Since a long time I haven't seen him."

They had passed these people now for several years. At one time the girl, whose letters he had read last night, had exclaimed about the shame of it each time they passed the lean-to.

"Why don't you do something about it, then?" he had asked her. "Why do you always say things are so terrible and write so well about how terrible they are and never do anything about it?"

This made the girl angry and she had stopped the car, gotten out, gone over to the lean-to and given the old woman twenty dollars and told her this was to help her find a better place to live and to buy something to eat.

"*Sí, señorita,"* the old woman said. "You are very amiable." The next time they came by the couple were living in the same place and they waved happily. They had bought a dog. It was a white dog too, small and curly, probably not bred originally, Thomas Hudson thought, for the coal dust trade.

"What do you think has become of the dog?" Thomas Hudson asked the chauffeur.

"It probably died. They have nothing to eat."

"We must get them another dog," Thomas Hudson said. Past the lean-to, which was now well behind them, they passed on the left the mud colored plastered walls of the headquarters of the general staff of the Cuban army. A Cuban soldier with some white blood stood indolently but proudly in his khakis faded from his wife's washings, his campaign hat much neater than General Stillwell's, his Springfield at the most comfortable angle across the ill-covered bones of his shoulder. He looked at the car absently. Thomas Hudson could see he was cold in the norther. I suppose he could warm up by walking his post, Thomas Hudson thought. But if he stays in that exact position and does not waste any energy the sun should be on him soon and that will warm him. He must not have been in the army very long to be so thin, he thought. By spring, if we still come by here in the spring, I probably will not recognize him. That Springfield must be awfully heavy for him. It is a shame he cannot stand guard with a light plastic gun the way bullfighters now use a wooden sword in their work with the *muleta* so their wrists will not tire.

“What about the division that General Benítez was going to lead into battle in Europe?” he asked the chauffeur. “Has that division left yet?”

“*Todavía no,*” the chauffeur said. “Not yet. But the general is practicing learning to ride a motorcycle. He practices early in the morning along the Malecon.”

“It must be a motorized division then,” Thomas Hudson said. “What are those packages that the soldiers and officers are carrying as they come out of the Estado Mayor?”

“Rice,” the chauffeur said. “There was a cargo of rice came in.”

“Is it difficult to get now?”

“Impossible. It’s in the clouds.”

“Do you eat badly now?”

“Very badly.”

“Why? You eat at the house. I pay for everything, no matter how far the price goes up.”

“I mean when I eat at home.”

“When do you eat at home?”

“Sundays.”

“I’ll have to buy you a dog,” Thomas Hudson said.

“We have a dog,” the chauffeur said. “A really beautiful and intelligent dog. He loves me more than anything in the world. I cannot move a foot that he does not want to come with me. But, Mr. Hudson, you cannot realize nor appreciate, you who have everything, what this war means in suffering to the people of Cuba.”

“There must be much hunger.”

“You cannot realize it.”

No, I can’t, Thomas Hudson thought. I can’t realize it at all. I can’t realize why there should ever be any hunger in this country ever. And you, you son of a bitch for the way you look after the motors of cars, you ought to be shot, not fed. I would shoot you with the greatest of pleasure. But he said, “I will see what I can do

about getting you some rice for your house."

"Thank you very much. You cannot conceive of how hard life is now for us Cubans."

"It must be really bad," Thomas Hudson said. "It is a shame cannot take you to sea for a rest and a vacation."

"It must be very difficult at sea, too."

"I believe it is," Thomas Hudson said. "Sometimes, even on a day such as today, I believe it is."

"We all have our crosses to bear."

"I would like to take my cross and stick it up the *culo* of a lot of people I know."

"It is necessary to take things with calm and patience, Mr. Hudson."

"Muchas gracias," said Thomas Hudson.

They had turned into San Isidro street below the main railway station and opposite the entrance to the old P. and O. docks where the ships from Miami and Key West used to dock and where the Pan American airways had its terminal when they were still flying the old clippers. It was abandoned now that the P. and O. boats had been taken over by the Navy and Pan American was flying DC-2s and DC-3s to the Rancho Boyeros airport and the Coast Guard and the Cuban navy had their sub chasers tied up where the clippers used to land.

Thomas Hudson remembered this part of Havana best from the old days. The part that he loved now had then been just the road to Matanzas; an ugly stretch of town, the castle of Atares, a suburb whose name he did not know, and then a brick road with towns strung along it. You sped through them so that you did not remember one from another. Then he had known every bar and dive around this part of town and San Isidro had been the great whorehouse street of the waterfront. It was dead now, with not a house functioning on it, and had been dead ever since they closed it and shipped all the whores back to Europe. That great shipment

had been the reverse of how Villefranche used to be when the American ships on the Mediterranean station would leave and all the girls would be waving. When the French ship left Havana with the girls aboard, all the waterfront was crowded and it was not only men that were saying goodbye, waving from the shore, the docks, and the sea wall of the harbor. There were girls in the chartered launches and the bumboats that circled the ship and ran alongside her as she went out the channel. It was very sad, he remembered, although many people thought it was very funny. Why whores should be funny he had never understood. The shipment was supposed to be very comic, though. But many people were sad after the ship had gone and San Isidro street had never recovered. The name still moved him, he thought, although it was a dull enough street now and you hardly ever saw a white man or woman on it except for truck drivers and delivery cart pushers. There were gay streets in Havana where only Negroes lived and there were some very tough streets and tough quarters, such as Jesús y María, which was just a short distance away. But this part of town was just sad as it had been ever since the whores had gone.

Now the car had come out onto the waterfront itself where the ferry that ran across to Regla docked and where the coast-wise sailing ships tied up. The harbor was brown and rough, but the sea that was running did not make whitecaps. The water was too brown. But it was fresh and clear brown-looking after the black foulness of the inner parts of the bay. Looking across it, he saw the calm of the bay that lay in the lee of the hills above Casablanca where the fishing smacks were anchored, where the gray gunboats of the Cuban navy lay, and where he knew his own ship was anchored, although he could not see her from here. Across the bay he saw the ancient yellow church and the sprawl of the houses of Regla, pink, green, and yellow houses, and the storage tanks and the refinery chimneys of Belot and behind them the gray hills toward Cojímar.

“Do you see the ship?” the chauffeur asked.

“Not from here.”

Here they were to the windward of the smoking chimneys of the Electric Company and the morning was as bright and clean and the air as clear and new-washed as on the hills of the farm. Everyone moving about the docks looked cold in the norther.

“Let’s go to the Floridita first,” Thomas Hudson said to the chauffeur.

“We are only four blocks from the Embassy here.”

“Yes. But I said I wished to go to the Floridita first.”

“As you wish.”

They rode straight up into town and were out of the wind and, passing the warehouses and stores, Thomas Hudson smelled the odor of stored flour in sacks and flour dust, the smell of newly opened packing cases, the smell of roasting coffee that was a stronger sensation than a drink in the morning, and the lovely smell of the tobacco that came strongest just before the car turned to the right toward the Floridita. This was one of the streets he loved but he did not like to walk along it in daylight because the sidewalks were too narrow and there was too much traffic and at night when there was no traffic they were not roasting the coffee and the windows of the storehouses were closed so you could not smell the tobacco.

“It is closed,” the chauffeur said. The iron shutters were still down on both sides of the café.

“I thought it would be. Go on down Obispo now to the Embassy.”

This was the street he had walked down a thousand times in the daytime and in the night. He did not like to ride down it because it was over so quickly but he could not justify himself delaying in reporting any longer and he drank the last of his drink and looked at the cars ahead, the people on the sidewalk, and the crossing traffic on the north and south streets, and saved the street for later

when he could walk it. The car stopped in front of the Embassy and Consulate building and he went in.

Inside you were supposed to fill out your name and address and the object of your visit at a table where a sad clerk with plucked eyebrows and a moustache across the extreme lower part of his upper lip looked up and pushed the paper toward him. He did not look at it and went into the elevator. The clerk shrugged his shoulders and smoothed his eyebrows. Perhaps he had emphasized them a little too much. Still they were cleaner and neater that way than wooly and bushy and they did go with his moustache. He had, he believed, the narrowest moustache it was possible to achieve and still have a moustache. Not even Errol Flynn had a narrower one, not even Pincho Gutierrez, not even Jorge Negrete. Still that son of a bitch Hudson had no right to walk in like that and ignore him.

"What sort of *maricones* have you on the door now?"

Thomas Hudson asked the elevator operator.

"That's not a *maricón.* That's nothing."

"How's everything here?"

"Good. Fine. The same as always."

He got off at the fourth floor and walked down the hall. He went in the middle door of the three and asked the Marine warrant officer at the desk if the Colonel was in.

"He flew down to Guantánamo this morning."

"When will he be back?"

"He said he might go to Haiti."

"Is there anything for me?"

"Nothing with me."

"Did he leave any message for me?"

"He said to tell you to stick around."

"How was he feeling?"

"Awful."

"How did he look?"

"Terrible."

“Was he plugged at me?”

“I don’t think so. He just said to tell you to stick around.”

“Is there anything I ought to know?”

“I don’t know. Is there?”

“Cut it out.”

“Okay. I suppose you had it pretty dusty. But you weren’t working for him in this office. You get out to sea. I don’t give a goddamn—”

“Take it easy.”

“Are you staying out in the country?”

“Yes. But I’m going to be in town today and tonight.”

“He won’t be back today or tonight. I’ll call you out in the country when he comes in.”

“You’re sure he’s not plugged at me?”

“I know he’s not plugged at you. What’s the matter? Have you got a bad conscience?”

“No. Is anybody else plugged at me?”

“As far as I know not even the Admiral is plugged at you. Go on out and get drunk for me.”

“I’m going to get drunk for myself first.”

“Get drunk for me, too.”

“What’s the matter? You’re drunk every night, aren’t you?”

“That’s not enough. How did Henderson do?”

“All right. Why?”

“Nothing.”

“Why?”

“Nothing. I just asked you. You have any complaints?”

“We don’t make complaints.”

“What a man. What a leader.”

“We formulate charges.”

“You can’t. You’re a civilian.”

“Go to hell.”

“I don’t have to. I’m there now.”

“You call me as soon as he gets in. And make my compliments to the Colonel and tell the Colonel I checked in.”

“Yes sir.”

“What’s the sir for?”

“Politeness.”

“Goodbye, Mr. Hollins.”

“Goodbye, Mr. Hudson. Listen. Keep your people where you can find them in a hurry.”

“Thank you very much, Mr. Hollins.”

Down the hall a Lieutenant Commander that he knew came out of the code room. His face was brown from golf and from the beach at Jaimanitas. He looked healthy and his unhappiness did not show. He was young and a very good Far East man. Thomas Hudson had known him when he had had the motor car agency in Manila and a branch agency in Hong Kong. He spoke Tagalog and good Cantonese. Naturally he also spoke Spanish. So he was in Havana.

“Hi, Tommy,” he said. “When did you get into town?”

“Last night.”

“How were the roads?”

“Moderately dusty.”

“You’ll turn the goddamnned car over some time.”

“I’m a careful driver.”

“You always were,” the Lieutenant Commander, whose name was Fred Archer, said. He put his arm around Thomas Hudson’s shoulders. “Let me feel of you.”

“Why?”

“You cheer me up. It cheers me up when I feel of you.”

“Have you been over to eat at the Pacífico?”

“Not for a couple of weeks. Should we go?”

“Anytime.”

“I can’t make lunch but we can eat there tonight. Do you have anything for tonight?”

“No. Just afterwards.”

“Me afterwards, too. Where shall I meet you? The Floridita?”

“Come on up there when the shop shuts.”

“Good. I have to come back here afterwards. So we can’t get too drunk.”

“Don’t tell me you bastards work nights now.”

“I do,” Archer said. “It isn’t a popular move.”

“I’m awfully glad to see you, Mr. Freddy,” Thomas Hudson said. “You make me feel cheerful, too.”

“You don’t have to feel cheerful,” Fred Archer said. “You’ve got it.”

“You mean I’ve had it.”

“You’ve had it. And you’ve rehad it. And you’ve rehad it doubled.”

“Not in spades.”

“Spades won’t be any use to you, brother. And you’ve still got it.”

“Write it out for me sometime, Freddy. I’d like to be able to read it early in the mornings.”

“You got a head in her yet?”

“No. Where the head was is about thirty-five thousand dollars worth of junk I signed for.”

“I know. I saw it in the safe. What you signed.”

“They’re goddamnned careless then.”

“You can say that again.”

“Is everybody careless?”

“No. And things are a lot better. Really, Tommy.”

“Good,” said Thomas Hudson. “That’s the thought for today.”

“Don’t you want to come in? There’s some new guys you’d like. Two really nice guys. One of them really beat up.”

“No. Do they know anything about the business?”

“No. Of course not. They just know you’re out there and they’d like to meet you. You’d like them. Nice guys.”

“Let’s meet them another time,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Okay, chief,” Archer said. “I’ll come up to your place when the joint closes.”

“The Floridita.”

“That’s what I meant.”

“I’m getting stupid.”

“It’s just sheepherder’s madness,” Archer said. “Do you want me to bring any of these characters?”

“No. Not unless you want to very much. Some of my mob may be around.”

“I should think you bastards wouldn’t want to see each other ashore.”

“Sometimes they get sort of lonesome.”

“What they ought to do is net them all and lock them up.”

“They’d get out.”

“Go on,” Archer said. “You’re late at the place.”

Fred Archer went in the door opposite the code room and Thomas Hudson walked down the hall and walked down the stairs instead of taking the elevator. Outside it was so bright the glare hurt his eyes and it was still blowing heavily from the north-northwest.

He got into the car and told the chauffeur to go up O’Reilly to the Floridita. Before the car circled the Plaza in front of the Embassy building and the Ayuntamiento and turned into O’Reilly he saw the size of the waves in the mouth of the harbor and the heavy rise and fall of the channel buoy. In the mouth of the harbor the sea was very wild and confused and clear green water was breaking over the rock at the base of the Morro, the tops of the seas blowing white in the sun.

It looks wonderful, he said to himself. It not only looks wonderful; it is wonderful. I’m going to have a drink on it. Christ, he thought, I wish I were as solid as Freddy Archer thinks I am. Hell, I am as solid. I always go and I always want to go. What the hell more do they want? For you to eat Torpex for breakfast? Or

stick it under your armpits like tobacco? That would be a hell of a good way to get jaundice, he thought. What do you suppose made you think of that? Are you getting spooky, Hudson? I am not, he said. I have certain unavoidable reactions. Many of them have not been classified. Especially not by me. I would just like to be as solid as Freddy thinks instead of being human. I think you have more fun as a human being even though it is much more painful. It is goddamnned painful right about now. It would be nice to be like they think, though. All right now. Don't think about that either. If you don't think about it, it doesn't exist. The hell it doesn't. But that's the system I'm going on, he thought.

The Floridita was open now and he bought the two papers that were out, *Crisol* and *Aleria,* and took them to the bar with him. He took his seat on a tall bar stool at the extreme left of the bar. His back was against the wall toward the street and his left was covered by the wall behind the bar. He ordered a double frozen daiquiri with no sugar from Pedrico, who smiled his smile which was almost like the rictus on a dead man who has died from a suddenly broken back, and yet was a true and legitimate smile, and started to read *Crisol.* The fighting was in Italy now. He did not know the country where the Fifth Army was fighting but he knew the country on the other side where the Eighth Army was and he was thinking about it when Ignacio Natera Revello came into the bar and stood beside him.

Pedrico set out a bottle of Victoria Vat, a glass with large chunks of ice in it, and a bottle of Canada Dry soda in front of Ignacio Natera Revello and he made a highball hurriedly and then turned toward Thomas Hudson, looking at him through his green-tinted, hornrimmed glasses and feigning to have just seen him.

Ignacio Natera Revello was tall and thin, dressed in a white linen countryman's shirt, white trousers, black silk socks, well-shined, old brown English brogues, and he had a red face, a yellow, tooth brushy moustache and nearsighted, bloodshot eyes that the

green glasses protected. His hair was sandy and brushed stiffly down. Seeing his eagerness for the highball, you might think it was the first of the day. It was not.

"Your ambassador is making an ass of himself," he said to Thomas Hudson.

"I'll be a sad son of a bitch," Thomas Hudson said.

"No. No. Be serious. Let me tell you. Now this is absolutely between you and me."

"Drink up. I don't want to hear about it."

"Well, you should hear about it. And you should do something about it."

"Aren't you cold?" Thomas Hudson asked him. "In that shirt and the light trousers?"

"I'm never cold."

You're never sober either, Thomas Hudson thought. You start to drink in that little bar by the house and by the time you come here for the first one of the day you're potted. You probably didn't even notice the weather when you dressed. Yes, he thought. And what about yourself? What time of day did you take your first drink this morning and how many have you had before this first one? Don't you cast the first stone at any rummies. It's not rummies, he thought. I don't mind him being a rummy. It is just that he is a damned bore. You don't have to pity bores and you do not have to be kind to them. Come on, he said. You're doing to have fun today. Relax and enjoy it.

"I'll roll you for this one," he said.

"Very well," said Ignacio. "You roll."

He rolled three kings in one, stood on them, naturally, and won.

That was pleasant. It couldn't make the drink taste any better. But it was a pleasant feeling to roll three kings in one and he enjoyed winning from Ignacio Natera Revello because he was a snob and a bore and winning from him gave him some useful significance.

“Now we’ll roll for this one,” Ignacio Natera Revello said.

He’s the type of snob and bore, that you always think of by all his three names, Thomas Hudson thought, just as you think of him as a snob and a bore. It’s probably like people who put III after their names. Thomas Hudson the third. Thomas Hudson the turd.

“You’re not Ignacio Natera Revello the third are you by any chance?”

“Of course not. You know my father’s name very well.”

“That’s right. Of course I do.”

“You know both my brothers’ names. You know my grandfather’s name. Don’t be silly.”

“I’ll try not to be,” Thomas Hudson said. “I’ll try quite hard.”

“Do,” Ignacio Natera Revello said. “It will be good for you.” Concentrating, working the leather cup in his best form, doing his hardest and best work of the morning, he rolled four jacks all day.

“My poor dear friend,” Thomas Hudson said. He shook the dice in the heavy leather cup and loved the sound of them. “Such kind good dice. Such rich-feeling and laudable dice,” he said.

“Go on and throw them and don’t be silly.”

Thomas Hudson rolled out three kings and a pair of tens on the slightly dampened bar.

“Want to bet?”

“We have a bet,” Ignacio Natera Revello said. “The second round of drinks.”

Thomas Hudson shook the dice lovingly again and rolled a queen and a jack.

“Want to bet now?”

“The odds are still greatly in your favor.”

“OK. I’ll just take the drinks then.”

He rolled a king and an ace, feeling them come out of the shaker solidly and proudly.

“You lucky sod.”

“Another double frozen daiquiri without sugar and whatever

Ignacio wants," Thomas Hudson said. He was beginning to feel fond of Ignacio.

"Look, Ignacio," he said. "I never heard of anyone looking at the world through green-colored glasses. Rose colored, yes. Green colored, no. Doesn't it give everything a sort of grassy look? Don't you feel as though you were on the turf? Do you never feel as though you had been turned out to pasture?"

"This is the most restful tint for the eyes. It's been proven by the greatest optometrists."

"Do you run around much with the greatest optometrists? They must be a pretty wild bunch."

"I don't know any optometrists personally except my own. But he is familiar with the findings of the others. He is the best in New York."

"I want to know the best in London."

"I know the best optometrist in London. But the very best is in New York. I'll be glad to give you a card to him."

"Let's roll for this one."

"Very well. You roll back to me."

Thomas Hudson picked up the leather cup and felt the heavy confident weight of the big Floridita dice. He barely stirred them in order not to irritate their kindness and generosity and rolled out three kings, a ten, and a queen.

"Three kings in one. The *clásico*."

"You *are* a bastard," Ignacio Natera Revello said and rolled an ace, two queens, and two jacks.

"Another double frozen daiquiri absolutely without sugar and whatever Don Ignacio wishes," Thomas Hudson said to Pedrico. Pedrico made his smile and the drink. He set down the mixer before Thomas Hudson with at least another full daiquiri in the bottom of it.

"I could do that to you all day," Thomas Hudson said to Ignacio.

"The horrible thing is that I'm afraid you could."

“The dice love me.”

“It’s good something does.”

Thomas Hudson felt the faint prickle go over his scalp that he had felt many times in the last month.

“How do you mean that, Ignacio?” he asked very politely.

“I mean that *I* certainly don’t, with you taking all my money.”

“Oh,” said Thomas Hudson. “Here’s to your good health.”

“I hope you die,” Ignacio Natera Revello said.

Thomas Hudson felt the prickle go over his scalp again. He reached his left hand against the bar where Ignacio Natera Revello could not see it and tapped softly three times with the ends of his fingers.

“That’s nice of you,” he said. “Do you want to roll for another round?”

“No,” the other said. “I’ve lost quite enough money to you for one day.”

“You haven’t lost any money. Only drinks.”

“I pay my bar bill here.”

“Ignacio,” Thomas Hudson said. “That’s the third slightly edgy thing you’ve said.”

“Well, I am edgy. If you’d had someone be as damned rude to you as your bloody ambassador was to me.”

“I still don’t want to hear about it.”

“There you are. And you call me edgy. Look, Thomas. We’re good friends. I’ve known you and your boy Tom for years. By the way how is he?”

“He’s dead.”

“I’m so sorry. I didn’t know.”

“That’s all right,” Thomas Hudson said. “I’ll buy you a drink.”

“I’m so very sorry. Please know how terribly sorry I am. How was he killed?”

“I don’t know yet,” Thomas Hudson said. “I’ll let you know when I know.”

"Where was it?"

"I don't know that. I know where he was flying but I don't know anything else."

"Did he get into London and see any of our friends?"

"Oh, yes. He'd been in town several times and to White's each time and he'd seen whoever was around."

"Well, that's a comfort in a way."

"A what?"

"I mean it's nice to know he saw our friends."

"Certainly. I'm sure he had a good time. He always had an awfully good time."

"Should we drink to him?"

"Shit, no," Thomas Hudson said. He could feel it all coming up; everything he had not thought about; all the grief he had put away and walled out and never even thought of on the trip nor all this morning. "Let's not."

"I think it is the thing to do," Ignacio Natera Revello said.

"I think it is eminently proper and the thing to do. But I must buy the drink."

"All right. We'll drink to him."

"What was his rank?"

"Flight lieutenant."

"He'd probably have been a wing commander by now or at least squadron leader."

"Let's skip his rank."

"Just as you wish," Ignacio Natera Revello said. "To my dear friend and your son Tom Hudson. *Dulce es morire pro patria*."

"In the pig's asshole." Thomas Hudson said.

"What's the matter. Was my Latin faulty?"

"I wouldn't know, Ignacio."

"But your Latin was excellent. I know from people who were at school with you."

"My Latin is very beat up," Thomas Hudson said. "Along with

my Greek, my English, my head, and my heart. All I know how to speak now is frozen daiquiri. *¿Tú hablas frozen daiquiri tú?"*

"I think we might show a little more respect to Tom."

"Tom was a pretty good joker."

"He certainly was. He had one of the finest and most delicate senses of humor I've ever known. And he was one of the best-looking boys and with the most beautiful manners. And a damned fine athlete. He was tops as an athlete."

"That's right. He threw the discus 142 feet. He played fullback on offense and left tackle on defense. He played a good game of tennis and he was a first-rate wing shot and a good fly fisherman."

"He was a splendid athlete and a fine sportsman. I think of him as one of the very finest."

"There's only one thing really wrong with him."

"What's that?"

"He's dead."

"Now don't be morbid, Tommy. You must think of Tom as he was. Of his gaiety and his radiance and his wonderful promise. There's no sense being morbid."

"None at all," Thomas Hudson said. "Let's not be morbid."

"I'm glad you agree. It's been splendid to have a chance to talk about him. It's been terrible to have the news. But I know you will bear up just as I will, even though it is a thousand times worse for you being his father. What was he flying?"

"Spitfires."

"Spitties. I shall think of him then in a Spitty."

"That's a lot of bother to go to."

"No, no it isn't. I've seen them in the cinema. I've several books on the RAF and we get the publications of the British Information Bureau. They have excellent stuff, you know. I know exactly how he would have looked. Probably wearing one of those Mae Wests and with his chute and his flying togs and his big boots. I can picture him exactly. Now I have to be getting home to lunch. Will you

come with me? I know Lutecia would love to have you."

"No. I have to meet a man here. Thanks very much."

"Goodbye, old boy," Ignacio Natera Revello said. "I know you'll take this thing the way you should."

"You were kind to help me."

"No, I wasn't kind at all. I loved Tom. As you did. As we all did."

"Thanks for all the drinks."

"I'll get them back from you another day."

He went out. From beyond him, down the bar, one of the men from the boat moved up to Hudson. He was a dark boy, with short, clipped, curly black hair, and a left eye that had a slightly droopy lid; the eye was artificial but this did not show since the government had presented him with four different eyes, bloodshot, slightly bloodshot, almost clear, and clear. He was wearing slightly bloodshot, and he was already a little drunk.

"Hi, Tom. When did you get in town?"

"Yesterday," then speaking slowly and almost without moving his lips, "Take it easy. Don't be a fucking comedian."

"I'm not. I'm just getting drunk. They cut me open they find security written on my liver. I'm the security king. You know that. Listen, Tom, I was standing up next to the phony Englishman and I couldn't help but hear. Did your boy Tommy get killed?"

"Yeah."

"Oh shit," the boy said. "Oh shit."

"I don't want to talk about it."

"Of course not. But when did you hear?"

"Before the last trip."

"Oh shit."

"What are you doing today?"

"I'm going to eat over at the Basque Bar with a couple of characters and then we're all going to get laid."

"Where are you going to have lunch tomorrow?"

"At the Basque Bar."

"Ask Paco to call me up from lunch tomorrow, will you?"

"Sure. Out at the house?"

"Yes. At the house."

"Do you want to come around with us and get laid? We're going up to Henry's Sin House?"

"I might come around."

"Henry's hunting girls now. He's been hunting girls ever since breakfast. He's been laid a couple of times already. But he trying to beat the two tomatoes we had. We got them at the Kursaal and they look pretty bad in the daylight. We couldn't find a goddamn thing. This town's really gone to hell. He's got the two tomatoes up at the sin house just in case and he's out hunting girls with Honest Lil. They've got a car."

"Were they doing any good?"

"I don't think so. Henry wants that little girl. The little one he sees all the time at the Fronton. Honest Lil can't get her because she's afraid of him because he's so big. She said she could get her for me. But she can't get her for Henry because she's spooked of his size and his weight and things she's heard. But Henry doesn't want anything else now because the two tomatoes topped him off. So now it's this little girl and he's in love with her. Just like that. In love with her. He's probably forgotten about it now and is banging the tomatoes again right now. He's got to eat, though, and we're going to meet at the Basque Bar."

"Make him eat," Thomas Hudson said.

"You can't make him do anything. *You* can. But I can't. But I'll beg him to eat. I'll plead with him to eat. I'll set him an example by eating."

"Get Paco to make him eat."

"There's an idea. Paco can probably get him to eat."

"Wouldn't you think he would be hungry after that?"

"Wouldn't you?"

Just then the biggest man that Thomas Hudson knew, and the

most cheerful and with the widest shoulders and the best manners came in through the door of the bar with a smile on his face, which was beading with sweat even on the cold day. His hand was out in greeting. He was so big he made everyone at the bar look stunted and he had a lovely smile. He was dressed in old blue trousers, a Cuban countryman's shirt, and rope-soled shoes. "Tom," he said. "You bastard. We've been in search of the lovelies."

His handsome face, as soon as he was out of the wind, sweated even more.

"Pedrico. I'll have one of those, too. The double size. Or larger if you make them. Imagine seeing you here, Tom. And I've forgotten. Here's Honest Lil. Come over here, my beauty."

Honest Lil had come in the other door. She looked her best when sitting at the far end of the bar when you saw only her lovely dark face and the grossness that had come over her body was hidden by the polished wood of the bar. Now, coming toward the bar from the door, there was no hiding her body, so she propelled it, swaying, to the bar as rapidly as she could without visibly hurrying and got up onto the stool Thomas Hudson had occupied. This moved him one stool to the right and gave her the covered left flank.

"Hello, Tom," she said and kissed Thomas Hudson.

"Henry is terrible."

"I'm not at all terrible, my beauty," Henry told her.

"You're terrible," she told him. "Every time I see you, you are more terrible. Thomas, you protect me from him."

"What's he being terrible about?"

"He wants a little tiny girl that he is crazy for and the little tiny girl can't go with him. But she wouldn't go anyway because she is frightened of him because he is so big and weighs two hundred and thirty pounds."

Henry Wood blushed, sweat visibly, and took a big sip of his drink.

“Two hundred and twenty-five,” he said.

“What did I tell you?” the dark boy said. “Isn’t that exactly what I told you?”

“Just what business is it of yours to be telling anyone anything?” Henry asked him.

“Two tramps. Two tomatoes. Two broken-down waterfront broads. Two cunts with but a single thought: the rent. We lay them. We trade cunts and relay them. It’s strictly from wet decks. I say one friendly understanding word now and I am not a gentleman.”

“They weren’t really awfully good, were they?” Henry said, blushing again.

“Awfully good? We ought to have poured gasoline on them and set them on fire.”

“How horrible,” Honest Lil said.

“Listen, lady,” the dark boy said. “I *am* horrible.”

“Willie,” Henry said. “Do you want the key to Sin House and go over and see if everything is all right?”

“I do not,” the dark boy said. “I have a key to Sin House as you have evidently forgotten and I do not want to go over there and see if everything is all right. The only way everything is all right there is whenever you or I kick those cunts into the street.”

“But suppose we can’t get anything else?”

“We have got to get something else. Lillian, why don’t you get off that stool and onto that telephone. Forget that little dwarf. Get that gnome out of your mind, Henry. You keep on with things like that you’ll be psycho. I know. I’ve been psycho.”

“You’re psycho now,” Thomas Hudson told him.

“Maybe I am, Tom. You should know. But I don’t fuck gnomes.” (He pronounced the word *Guhnomays.)* “If Henry has to have a guhnomay that’s his business. But I don’t believe he has to have one any more than he has to have one-armed women or one-legged women. Let him forget the goddamn guhnomay and get Lillian there onto the telephone.”

“I’ll take any good girls we can get,” Henry said. “I hope you’re not mixed up, Willie?”

“We don’t want good girls,” Willie said. “You start on that, right away you’ll get psycho in a different way. Am I right, Tommy? Good girls is the most dangerous thing of all. Besides they will get you either on a contributing to delinquency or on a rape or attempted rape. Out with that good girls stuff. We want whores. Nice, clean, attractive, interesting, inexpensive whores. That can fuck. Lillian, what is keeping you away from that telephone?”

“One thing is that a man is using it and another is waiting by the cigar counter for him to finish,” Honest Lil said. “You’re a bad boy, Willie.”

“I’m a horrible boy,” Willie said. “I’m the worst goddamn boy you’ll ever know. But I’d like us to get better organized than we are now.”

“We’re going to have a drink or so,” Henry said. “Then I’m sure Lillian will find someone that she knows. Won’t you, my beauty?”

“Of course,” Honest Lil said in Spanish. “Why couldn’t I? But I want to telephone from a telephone in a booth. Not from here. It isn’t proper to call from here and it isn’t fitting.”

“A delay,” Willie said. “All right. I accept it. Just another delay. Let’s drink then.”

“What the hell have you been doing?” Thomas Hudson asked.

“Tommy, I love you,” Willie said. “What the hell have you been doing yourself?”

“I had a few with Ignacio Natera Revello.”

“That sounds like an Italian cruiser,” Willie said. “Wasn’t there an Italian cruiser named that?”

“I don’t think so.”

“It sounds like it, anyway.”

“Let me see the tabs,” Henry said. “How many were there, Tom?”

“Ignacio took them. I won them from him rolling.”

“How many were there really?” Henry asked.

“I think four.”

“What did you drink before that?”

“A Tom Collins coming in.”

“And at home?”

“Plenty.”

“You’re just a damned rummy,” Willie said. “Pedrico, three more double frozen daiquiris and whatever the lady wants.”

“Un highbalito can agua mineral,” Honest Lil said. “Tommy, come and sit with me at the other end of the bar. They don’t like me to sit at this end of the bar.”

“The hell with them,” Willie said. “Great friends like us that never see each other and then we can’t have a drink with you at this end of the bar. The hell with that.”

“I’m sure you’re all right here, beauty,” Henry said. Then he saw two planter friends of his farther down the bar and went to speak to them without waiting for his drink.

“He’s off now,” Willie said. “He’ll forget about the guhnomay now.”

“He’s very distrait,” Honest Lil said. “He’s awfully distrait.”

“It’s the life we lead,” Willie said. “Just the ceaseless pursuit of pleasure for pleasure’s sake. Goddamit, we ought to pursue pleasure seriously.”

“Tom’s not distrait,” Honest Lil said. “Tom is sad.”

“Cut out that shit,” Willie said to her. “What are you pissed off about? First somebody is distrait. Then somebody is sad. Before that I’m horrible. So what? Where does a cunt like you get off criticizing people all the time? Don’t you know you’re supposed to be gay?”

Honest Lil began to cry, real tears, bigger and wetter than any in the movies. She could always cry real tears any time she wanted to or needed to or was hurt.

“That cunt cries bigger tears than mother used to make,” Willie said.

“Willie, you shouldn’t call me that.”

“Cut it out, Willie,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Willie, you are a cruel wicked boy and I hate you,” Honest Lil said. “I don’t know why men like Thomas Hudson and Henry go around with you. You are wicked and you talk vile.”

“You’re a lady,” Willie said. “You shouldn’t say things like that. Vile is a bad word. It’s like spit on the end of your cigar.”

Thomas Hudson put his hand on the boy’s shoulder. “Drink up, Willie. Nobody’s feeling too good.”

“Henry’s feeling good. I could tell him what you told me and then he’d feel awful.”

“You asked me.”

“That isn’t what I mean. Why don’t you split your goddamn grief? Why did you keep that by yourself the last two weeks?”

“Grief doesn’t split.”

“A grief hoarder,” Willie said. “I never thought you’d be a goddamnned grief hoarder.”

“I don’t need any of this, Willie,” Thomas Hudson said to him. “Thank you very much, though. You don’t have to work on me.”

“OK. Hoard it. But it’ll do you no damn good. I tell you I was brought up on the goddamnned stuff.”

“So was I,” Thomas Hudson said. “No shit.”

“Were you really? Then maybe your own system’s best. You were getting to look pretty screwy, though.”

“That’s just from drinking and being tired and not relaxed yet.”

“You hear from your woman?”

“Sure. Three letters.”

“How’s that going?”

“Couldn’t be worse.”

“Well,” Willie said. “There we are. You might as well hoard it so as to have something.”

“I’ve got something.”

“Sure. Your cat Boise loves you. I know that. I’ve seen that. How

is the screwy old bastard?"

"Just as screwy."

"He beats the shit out of me," Willie said. "He does."

"He certainly sweats things out."

"Doesn't he, though? If I suffered like that cat does I'd be nuts. What are you drinking, Thomas?"

"Another one of those."

Willie put his arm around Honest Lil's ample waist. "Listen, Lilly," he said. "You're a good girl. I didn't mean to get you sore. It was my fault. I was feeling emotional."

"You won't talk that way anymore?"

"No. Not unless I get emotional."

"Here's yours," Thomas Hudson said to him. "Here's to you, you son of a bitch."

"Now you're talking," Willie said. "Now you've got the old peeker pointed north. We ought to have that cat Boise here. He'd be proud of you. See what I meant by sharing it?"

"Yes," Thomas Hudson said. "I see."

"All right," Willie said. "We'll drop it. Put out your can, here comes the garbage man. Look at that damn Henry. Get a load of him. What do you suppose makes him sweat like that on a cold day like today?"

"Girls," Honest Lil said. "He is obsessed with them." "Obsessed," Willie said. "You bore a hole in his head anywhere you want with a half-inch bit and women would run out. Obsessed. Why don't you get a word that would fit it?"

"Obsessed is a strong word in Spanish anyway."

"Obsessed? Obsessed is nothing. If I get time this afternoon I'll think up the word."

"Tom, come down to the other end of the bar where we can talk and I can be comfortable. Will you buy me a sandwich? I've been out all morning with Henry."

"I'm going to the Basque Bar," Willie said. "Bring him over

there, Lil."

"All right," Honest Lil said. "Or I'll send him."

She made her stately progress to the far end of the bar, speaking to many of the men she passed and smiling at others. Everyone treated her with respect. Nearly everyone she spoke to had loved her at some time in the last twenty-five years. Thomas Hudson went down to the far end of the bar, taking his bar checks with him, as soon as Honest Lil had seated herself and smiled at him. She had a beautiful smile and wonderful dark eyes and lovely black hair. When it would begin to show white at the roots along the line of her forehead and along the line of the part, she would ask Thomas Hudson for money to have it fixed and when she came back from having it dyed it was as glossy and natural-looking and lovely as a young girl's hair. She had a skin that was as smooth as olive-colored ivory, if there were olive-colored ivory, with a slightly smoky rose-like cast. Actually, the color always reminded Thomas Hudson of well-seasoned *mahagua* lumber when it is freshly cut, then simply sanded smooth and waxed lightly. Nowhere else had he ever seen that smoky almost greenish color. But the *mahagua* did not have the rose tint. The rose tint was just the color that she used but it was almost as smooth as a Chinese girl's. There was this lovely face looking down the bar at him, lovelier all the time as he came closer. Then he was beside her and there was the big body and the rose color was artificial now and there was no mystery about any of it, although it was still a lovely face.

"You look beautiful, Honest," he said to her.

"Oh, Tom, I am so big now. I am ashamed."

He put his hand on her great haunches and said, "You're a nice big."

"I'm ashamed to walk down the bar."

"You do it beautifully. Like a ship."

"How is our friend?"

"He's fine."

“When am I going to see him?”

“Any time. Now?”

“Oh no. Tom, what was Willie talking about? The part I couldn’t understand?”

“He was just being crazy.”

“No, he wasn’t. It was about you and a sorrow. Was it about you and your señora?”

“No. Fuck my señora.”

“I wish you could. But you can’t when she is away.”

“Yeah. I found that out.”

“What is the sorrow, then?”

“Nothing. Just a sorrow.”

“Tell me about it. Please.”

“There’s nothing to tell.”

“You can tell me, you know. Henry tells me about his sorrows and cries in the night. Willie tells me dreadful things. They are not sorrows, so much as terrible things. You can tell me. Everyone tells me. Only you don’t tell me.”

“Telling never did me any good. Telling is worse for me than not telling.”

“Tom, Willie says such bad things. Doesn’t he know it hurts me to hear such words? Doesn’t he know I’ve never used those words and have never done a pig-like thing nor a perverted thing?”

“That’s why we call you Honest Lil.”

“If I could be rich doing perverted things and be poor doing normal things, I would be poor.”

“I know. What about the sandwich?”

“I’m not hungry just yet.”

“Do you want another drink?”

“Yes. Please, Tom. Tell me. Willie said there was a cat in love with you. That isn’t true, is it?”

“Yes. It’s true.”

“I think it’s dreadful.”

“No. It’s not. I’m in love with the cat, too.”

“That’s terrible to say. Don’t tease me, Tom, please. Willie teased me and made me cry.”

“I love the cat,” Thomas Hudson said.

“I don’t want to hear about it. Tom, when will you take me out to the bar of the crazies?”

“One of these days.”

“Do the crazies really come there just like ordinary people come here to meet and have drinks?”

“That’s right. The only difference is they wear shirts and trousers made out of sugar sacks.”

“Did you really play on the ball team of the crazies against the lepers?”

“Sure. I was the best knuckle ball pitcher the crazies ever had.”

“How did you get to know them?”

“I just stopped there one time on the way back from Rancho Boyeros and liked the place.”

“Will you really take me out to the bar of the crazies?”

“Sure. If you won’t be scared.”

“I’ll be scared. But I won’t be too scared if I’m with you. That’s why I want to go out there. To be scared.”

“There’s some wonderful crazies out there. You’ll like them.”

“My first husband was a crazy. But he was the difficult kind.”

“Do you think Willie is crazy?”

“Oh no. He just has a difficult character.”

“He’s suffered very much.”

“Who hasn’t? Willie presumes on his suffering.”

“I don’t think so. I know about it. I promise you.”

“Let’s talk about something else, then. Do you see that man down there at the bar talking to Henry?”

“Yes.”

“All he likes in bed are pig-like things.”

“Poor man.”

"He's not poor. He's rich. But all he cares for is *porquerías."*

"Didn't you ever like *porquerías?"*

"Never. You can ask anyone. And I've never done anything with girls in my life."

"Honest Lil," Thomas Hudson said.

"Wouldn't you rather have me that way? You don't like *porquerías.* You like to make love and be happy and go to sleep. I know you."

"*Todo el mundo me conoce*."

"No, they don't. They have all sorts of different ideas about you. But I know you."

He was drinking another of the frozen daiquiris with no sugar in it and as he lifted it, heavy and the glass frost-rimmed, he looked at the clear part below the frapped top and it reminded him of the sea. The frapped part of the drink was like the wake of a ship and the clear part was the way the water looked when the bow cut it when you were in shallow water over marl bottom. That was almost the exact color.

"I wish they had a drink the color of sea water when you have a depth of eight hundred fathoms and there is a dead calm with the sun straight up and down and the sea full of plankton," he said.

"What?"

"Nothing. Let's drink this shallow water drink."

"Tom, what's the matter? Do you have some problem?"

"No."

"You're awfully sad and you're a little bit old today."

"It's the norther."

"But you always used to say a norther gave you pep and cheered you up. How many times have we made love because there was a norther?"

"Plenty."

"You always liked a norther and you bought me this coat to wear when we have them."

“It’s a pretty coat, too.”

“I could have sold it half a dozen times,” Honest Lil said. “More people were crazy for this coat than you can imagine.”

“This is a fine norther for it.”

“Be happy, Tom. You always get happy when you drink. Drink that drink and have another one.”

“If I drink it too fast it hurts across the front of my forehead.”

“Well just drink slow and steady, then. I’m going to have another *highbalito.”*

She made it herself from the bottle Serafín had left in front of her on the bar and Thomas Hudson looked at it and said, “That’s a fresh water drink. That is the color of the water in the Firehole River before it joins the Gibbon to become the Madison. If you put a little more whisky in it you could make it the color of a stream that comes out of a cedar swamp to flow into the Bear River at a place called Wab-Me-Me.”

“Wab-Me-Me is funny,” she said. “What does it mean?”

“I don’t know,” he said. “It is an Indian placename. I ought to know what it means but I’ve forgotten. It’s Ojibway.”

“Tell me about Indians,” Honest Lil said. “I like to hear about the Indians even more than about the crazies.”

“There are quite a few Indians down the coast. They are sea Indians and they fish and dry the fish and are charcoal burners.”

“I don’t want to hear about Cuban Indians. They’re all *mulatos.”*

“No, they’re not. Some are real Indians. But they may have captured them in the early days and brought them over from Yucatan.”

“I don’t like *yucatecos*.”

“I do. Very much.”

“Tell me about Wabmimi. Is it in the Far West?”

“No, it’s up north. In the part that’s near Canada.”

“I know Canada. I came into Montreal up the river once on a Princess ship. But it was raining and we could see nothing and we

left that same evening for New York on the train."

"Did it rain all the time on the river?"

"All the time. And outside, before we came into the river, there was fog and part of the time it snowed. You can have Canada. Tell me about Wabmimi."

"It was just a village where there was a sawmill on the river and the train ran through it. There were always great piles of sawdust beside the railroad tracks. They had booms across the river to hold the logs and they were almost solid across the river. The river was covered with logs a long way above the town. One time I had been fishing and I wanted to cross the river and I crawled across on the logs. One rolled with me and I went into the water. When I came up it was all logs above me and I could not get through between them. It was dark under them and all I could feel with my hands was their bark. I could not spread two of them apart to get up to the air."

"What did you do?"

"I drowned."

"Oh," she said. "Don't say it. Tell me quick what you did?"

"I thought very hard and I knew I had to get through very quickly. I felt very carefully around the bottom of a log until I came to where it was pushed against another log. Then I put my two hands together and pushed up and the logs spread apart just a little. Then I got my hands through and then my forearms and elbows through and then I spread the two logs apart with my elbows until I got my head up and I had an arm over each log. I loved each log very much and I lay there like that a long time between them. That water was brown from the logs in it. The water that's like your drink was in a little stream that flowed into that river."

"I don't think I could ever have come up between the logs."

"I didn't think I could for a long time."

"How long were you underwater?"

"I don't know. I know I rested a long time with my arms on the logs before I tried to do anything else."

“I like that story. But it will make me have bad dreams. Tell me something happy, Tom.”

“All right,” he said. “Let me think.”

“No. Tell one right away without thinking.”

“All right,” Thomas Hudson said. “When young Tom was a little baby—”

“¡Qué muchacho más guapo!” Honest Lil interrupted. *“¿Qué noticias tienes de él.”*

“Muy buenas.”

“*Me alegro,”* said Honest Lil, tears coming into her eyes at the thought of young Tom the flyer. *“Siempre tengo su fotografía en uniforme con el sagrado corazón de Jesús arriba de la fotografía y al lado la virgen del Cobre.”*

“You have great faith in the Virgen del Cobre?”

“Absolutely blind faith.”

“You must keep it.”

“And she is looking after Tom day and night.”

“Good,” said Thomas Hudson. “Serafín, another of these big ones, please. Do you want the happy story?”

“Yes, please,” Honest Lil said. “Please tell me the happy story. I feel sad again.”

“Pues el happy story es muy sencillo,” Thomas Hudson said. “The first time we ever took Tom to Europe, he was only three months old and it was a very old, small, and slow liner and the sea was rough most of the time. The ship smelled of bilge and oil and the grease on the brass of portholes and of the lavabos and the disinfectant they used that was in big pink cakes in the pissoirs—”

“Pues, this isn’t a very happy story.”

“Sí, mujer. You’re wrong as hell. This is a happy story, *muy* happy. I go on. The ship also smelled of baths you had to take at regular hours or be looked down on by the bath steward and of the smell of hot salt water coming out of the brass nozzles of the bath fixtures and of the wet wooden grate on the floor and of the

starched jacket of the bath steward. It also smelled of cheap English ship cooking which is a discouraging smell and of the dead butts of Woodbines, Players, and Gold Flakes in the smoking room and wherever they were dropped. It did not have one good smell, and as you know the English, both men and women, all have a peculiar odor, even to themselves, much as we have to Negroes, and so they have to bathe very often. An Englishman never smells sweet as a cow's breath does and a pipe-smoking Englishman does not conceal his odor. He only adds something to it. Their tweeds smell good and so does the leather of their boots and all their saddlery smells good. But there is no saddlery on a ship and the tweeds are impregnated with the dead pipe smell. The only way you could get a good smell on that ship was when your nose was deep in a tall glass of dry sparkling cider from Devon. This smelled wonderful and I kept my nose in it as much as I could afford. Maybe more."

"Pues, it is a little more happy now."

"Here is the happy part. Our cabin was so low, just above the water line, that the port had to be kept closed all the time and you saw the sea racing by and then you saw it solid green as the sea went past the porthole. We had built a barricade with trunks and suitcases roped together so that Tom could not fall out of the berth and when his mother and I would come down to see how he was, every time we ever came, if he was awake, he was laughing."

"Did he really laugh when he was three months old?"

"He laughed all the time. I never heard him cry when he was a baby."

"¡Qué muchocho más lindo y más guapo!"

"Yes," Thomas Hudson said. "Very high-class muchacho. Want me to tell you another happy story about him?"

"Why did you leave his lovely mother?"

"A very strange combination of circumstances. Do you want another happy story?"

"Yes. But without so many smells in it."

“This frozen daiquiri, so well beaten as it is, looks like the sea where the wave falls away from the bow of a ship when she is doing thirty knots. How do you think frozen daiquiris would be if they were phosphorescent?”

“You could put phosphorous in them. But I don’t think it would be healthy. Sometimes people in Cuba commit suicide by eating phosphorous from the heads of matches.”

“And drinking *tinte rapido.* What is rapid ink?”

“It is a dye to make shoes black. But most often girls who have been crossed in love or when their fiancés have not kept their promises and done the things to them and then gone away without marrying, commit suicide by pouring alcohol on themselves and setting themselves on fire. That is the classic way.”

“I know,” Thomas Hudson said. *“Auto da fé.”*

“It’s very certain,” Honest Lil said. “They nearly always die. The burns are on the head first and usually all over the body. Rapid ink is more of a gesture. Iodine is *au fond* a gesture, too.”

“What are you two ghouls talking about?” Serafín the barman asked.

“Suicides.”

“Hay mucho,” Serafín said. “Especially among the poor. I don’t remember a rich Cuban committing suicide. Do you?”

“Yes,” Honest Lil said. “I know of several cases—good people, too.”

“You would,” Serafín said.

“Señor Tomás, do you want something to eat with those drinks? *¿Un poco de pescado? ¿Puerco frito?* Any cold meats?”

“Sí,” Thomas Hudson said. “Whatever there is.”

Serafín put a plate of bits of pork, fried brown and crisped, and a plate of red snapper fried in batter so that it wore a yellow crust over the pink-red skin and the white sweet fish inside. He was a tall boy, naturally rough spoken, and he walked roughly from the wooden shoes he wore against the wet and the spillage behind the

bar.

"Do you want cold meats?"

"No. This is enough."

"Take anything they will give you, Tom," Honest Lil said. "You know this place."

The bar had a reputation for never buying a drink. But actually it gave an uncounted number of plates of hot free lunch each day; not only the fried fish and pork, but plates of little hot meat fritters and sandwiches of French-fried bread with toasted cheese and ham. The bartenders also mixed the daiquiris in a huge shaker and there was always at least a drink and a half left in the shaker after the drinks were poured.

"Are you less sad now?" Honest Lil asked.

"Yes."

"Tell me, Tom. What are you sad about?"

"El mundo entero."

"Who isn't sad about the whole world? It goes worse all the time. But you can't spend your time being sad about that."

"There isn't any law against it."

"There doesn't have to be a law against things for them to be wrong."

Ethical discussions with Honest Lil are not what I need, Thomas Hudson thought. What do you need, you bastard? You needed to get drunk which you are probably doing even though it does not seem so to you. There is no way for you to get what you need and you will never have what you want again. But there are various palliative measures you should take. Go ahead. Take one.

"Voy a tomar otro de estos grandes sin azúcar," he said to Serafín.

"En seguida, Don Tomás," Serafín said. "Are you going to try to beat the record?"

"No. I'm just drinking with calmness."

"You were drinking with calmness when you set the record," Serafín said. "With calmness and fortitude from morning until

night. And you walked out on your own feet."

"The hell with the record."

"You've got a chance to break it," Serafín told him. "Drinking as you are now and eating a little as you go along, you have an excellent chance."

"Tom, try to break the record," Honest Lil said. "I'm here as a witness."

"He doesn't need any witness," Serafín said. "I'm the witness. When I go off I'll give the count to Constante. You're further along right now than you were the day you set the record."

"The hell with the record."

"You're in good form. You're drinking well and steady and they're not having any effect on you."

"Fuck the record."

"All right. *Como usted quiere.* I'm keeping count just in case you change your mind."

"He'll keep count all right," Honest Lil said. "He has the duplicate tickets."

"What do you want, woman? Do you want a real record or a phony record?"

"Neither. I want a *highbalito* with *agua mineral."*

"Como siempre," Serafín said.

"I drink brandy, too."

"I don't want to be here when you drink brandy."

"Tom, did you know I fell down trying to get onto a streetcar and was nearly killed?"

"Poor Honest Lil," Serafín said. "A dangerous and adventurous life."

"Better than yours standing all day in wooden shoes behind a bar and serving rummies."

"That's my trade," Serafín said. "It's a privilege to serve such distinguished rummies as you."

Henry Wood came over. He stood, tall and sweating and newly

excited by a change of plans. There was nothing that pleased him, Thomas Hudson thought, like a sudden change of plans.

"We're going over to Alfred's Sin House," he said. "Do you want to come, Tom?"

"Willie's waiting for you at the Bar Basque."

"I don't believe we really want Willie on this one."

"You ought to tell him, then."

"I'll call him up. Don't you want to come? This is going to be very good."

"You ought to eat something."

"I'll eat a good big dinner. How are you doing?"

"I'm doing fine," Thomas Hudson said. "Really fine."

"Are you going to try for the record?"

"No."

"Will I see you tonight?"

"I don't think so."

"I'll come out and sleep at the house if you like."

"No. Have fun. But eat something."

"I'll eat an excellent dinner. Word of honor."

"Be sure and call Willie."

"I'll call Willie. You can be quite sure."

"Where's Alfred's Sin House?"

"It's an absolutely beautiful place. It overlooks the harbor and it's well furnished and really delightful."

"I mean what is the address."

"I don't know but I'll tell Willie."

"You don't think Willie will be hurt?"

"I can't help it if he is, Tom. I really can't ask Willie on this. You know how fond I am of Willie. But there are things I simply can't ask him on. You know that as well as I do."

"All right. But call him up."

"Word of honor I'll call him. And word of honor I'll eat a first-rate dinner."

He smiled, patted Honest Lil on the shoulder, and was gone. He moved very beautifully for such a big man.

"What about the girls at his place?" Thomas Hudson asked Honest Lil.

"They're gone by now," Honest Lil said. "There's nothing to eat there. And I don't think there is much to drink. Do you want to go around there or would you rather come to my place?"

"Your place," Thomas Hudson said. "But later on."

"Tell me another happy story."

"All right. What about?"

"Serafín," Lil said. "Give Tomás another double frozen without sugar. *Teugo todavía mi highbalito."* Then to Thomas Hudson, "About the happiest time you remember. And not with smells."

"It has to have smells," Thomas Hudson said. He watched Henry Wood across the square getting into the sport car of the very rich sugar planter named Alfred. Henry Wood was too big for the car. He was too big for almost anything, he thought. But he knew three or four things he was not too big for. No, he said to himself. This is your day off. Take your day off.

"What do you want the story to be about?"

"What I asked you."

He watched Serafín pour the drink from the shaker into the tall glass and saw the top of it curl over the edge and onto the bar. Serafín pushed the base of the glass into the slit in a cardboard protector and Thomas Hudson lifted it, heavy and cold above the thin stem he held in his fingers, and took a long sip and held it in his mouth, cold against his tongue and teeth, before he swallowed it.

"All right," he said. "The happiest day I ever had was any day when I woke in the morning when I was a boy and I did not have to go to school or to work. In the morning I was always hungry when I woke and I could smell the dew in the grass and hear the wind in the high branches of the hemlock trees, if there was a wind, and if

there was no wind I could hear the quietness of the forest and the calmness of the lake and I would listen for the first noises of morning. Sometimes the first noise would be a kingfisher flying over the water that was so calm it mirrored his reflection and he made a clattering cry as he flew. Sometimes it would be a squirrel chittering in one of the trees outside the house, his tail jerking each time he made a noise. Often it would be the plover calling on the hillside. But whenever I woke and heard the first morning noises and felt hungry and knew I would not have to go to school nor have to work, I was happier than I have ever been."

"Even than with women?"

"I've been very happy with women. Desperately happy. Unbearably happy. So happy that I could not believe it; that it was like being drunk or crazy. But never as happy as with my children when we were all happy together or the way I was early in the morning."

"But how could you be as happy by yourself as with someone?"

"This is all silly. You asked me to tell you whatever came in my mind."

"No, I didn't. I said to tell me a happy story about the happiest time you remember. That wasn't a story. You just woke up and were happy. Tell me a real story."

"What about?"

"Put some love in it."

"What kind of love? Sacred or profane?"

"No. Just good love with fun."

"I know a good story about that."

"Tell it to me then. Do you want another drink?"

"Not till I finish this one. All right. At this time I was in Hong Kong which is a very wonderful city where I was very happy and had a crazy life. There is a beautiful bay and on the mainland side of the bay is the city of Kowloon. Hong Kong itself is on a hilly island that is beautifully wooded and there are winding roads up to

the top of the hills and houses built high up in the hills and the city is at the base of the hills facing Kowloon. You go back and forth by fast, modern ferryboats. This Kowloon is a fine city and you would like it very much. It is clean and well laid-out and the forest comes to the edge of the city and there is very fine wood pigeon shooting just outside of the compound of the Women's Prison. We used to shoot the pigeons, which were large and handsome with lovely purple shading feathers on their necks, and a strong swift way of flying, when they would come in to roost just at twilight in a huge laurel tree that grew just outside the whitewashed wall of the prison compound. Sometimes I would take a high incomer, coming very fast with the wind behind him, directly overhead and the pigeon would fall inside the compound of the prison and you would hear the women shouting and squealing with delight as they fought over the bird and then squealing and shrieking as the Sikh guard drove them off and retrieved the bird which he then brought dutifully out to us through the sentry's gate of the prison.

"The mainland around Kowloon was called the New Territories and it was hilly and forested and there were many wood pigeons, and in the evening you could hear them calling to each other. There were often women and children digging the earth from the side of the roads and putting it into baskets. When they saw you with a shotgun, they ran and hid in the woods. I found out that they dug the earth because it had wolfram, the ore of tungsten, in it. This was very saleable then."

"Es un poco pesada esta historia."

"No, Honest Lil. It isn't really a dull story. Wait and see. Wolfram itself is *pesado.* But it is a very strange business. Where it exists it is the easiest thing there is to mine. You simply dig up the dirt and haul it away. Or you pick up the stones and carry them off. There are whole villages in Extremadura in Spain that are built of rock that has very high grade wolfram ore and the stone fences of the peasant's fields are all made of this ore. Yet the peasants are

very poor. At this time it was so valuable that we were using DC-2s, transport planes such as fly from here to Miami, to fly it over from a field at Nam Yung in Free China to Kai Tak airport at Kowloon. From there it was shipped to the States. It was considered very scarce and of vital importance in our preparations for war since it was needed for hardening steel, yet anyone could go out and dig up as much of it in the hills of the New Territories as he or she could carry on a flat basket balanced on the head to the big shed where it was bought clandestinely. I found this out when I was hunting wood pigeons and I brought it to the attention of people purchasing wolfram in the interior. No one was very interested and I kept bringing it to the attention of people of higher rank until one day a very high officer who was not at all interested that wolfram was there free to be dug up in the New Territories said to me, 'But after all, old boy, the Nam Yung setup *is* functioning you know.' But when we shot in the evenings outside the women's prison and would see an old Douglas twin-motor plane come in over the hills and slide down toward the airfield, and you knew it was loaded with sacked wolfram and had just flown over the Jap lines, it was strange to know that many of the women in the women's prison were there for having been caught digging wolfram illicitly."

"Sí, es raro," Honest Lil said. "But when does the love come in?"

"Any time you want it," Thomas Hudson said. "But you'll like it better if you know the sort of place it happened in.

"There are many islands and bays around Hong Kong and the water is clear and beautiful. The New Territories was really a wooded and hilly peninsula that extended out from the mainland and the island Hong Kong was built on is in the great, blue, deep bay that runs from the South China Sea all the way up to Canton. In the winter the climate was much as it is today when there is a norther blowing, with rain and blustery weather and it was cool for sleeping.

"I would wake in the mornings and even if it were raining I

would walk to the fish market. Their fish are almost the same as ours and the basic food fish is the red grouper. But they had very fat and shining pompano and huge prawns, the biggest I have ever seen. The fish market was wonderful in the early morning when the fish were brought in shining and fresh caught and there were quite a few fish I did not know, but not many and there were also wild ducks for sale that had been trapped. You could see pintails, teal, widgeon, both males and females in winter plumage, and there were wild ducks that I had never seen with plumage as delicate and complicated as our wood ducks. I would look at them and their unbelievable plumage and their beautiful eyes and see the shining, fat, new—caught fish and the beautiful vegetables all manured in the truck gardens by human excrement, they called it "night-soil" there, and the vegetables were as beautiful as snakes. I went to the market every morning, and every morning it was a delight.

"Then in the mornings there were always people being carried through the streets to be buried, with the mourners dressed in white and a band playing gay tunes. The tune they played oftenest for funeral processions that year was "Happy Days Are Here Again." During a day you were almost never out of sound of it, for people were dying in great numbers and there were said to be four hundred millionaires living on the Island besides whatever millionaires were living in Kowloon."

"¿Millonarios chinos?"

"Mostly Chinese millionaires. But millionaires of all sorts. I knew many millionaires myself and we used to have lunch together at the great Chinese restaurants. They had several restraurants that are as great as any in the world and the Cantonese cooking is superb. My best friends that year were ten millionaires, all of whom I knew only by their first two initials, H.M., M.Y., T.V., H.J., and so on. All important Chinese were known in this way. Also three Chinese generals, one of whom came from Whitechapel in London and was a truly splendid man, an inspector of police; about six pilots for the

Chinese National Aviation Company, who were making fabulous money and earning all of it and more; a policeman; a partially insane Australian; a number of British officers and—But I will not bore you with the rest of them. I had more friends, close and intimate friends, in Hong Kong than I ever had before or since."

"¿Cuándo viene el amor?"

"I am trying to think what *amor* to put in first. All right. Here comes some *amor."*

"Make it good because I'm already a little tired by China."

"You wouldn't have been. You would have been in love with it as I was."

"Why didn't you stay there, then?"

"You couldn't stay there because the Japs were going to come in and take it at any time."

"Todo esuá jodido por la guerra."

"Yes," said Thomas Hudson. "I agree." He had never heard Honest Lil use such a strong word and he was surprised.

"Me cansan con la guerra."

"Me, too," said Thomas Hudson. "I'm very tired of it. But I'm never tired of thinking about Hong Kong."

"Tell me about it then. It is *bastante interesante.* I just wanted to hear about love."

"Actually everything was so interesting that there was not much time for love."

"Who did you make love to first?"

"I made love to a very tall and beautiful Chinese girl who was very European and emancipated but would not go to the hotel to sleep with me because she said everybody would know about it and who would not let me sleep at her house because she said the servants would know about it. Her police dog already knew about it. He used to make it very difficult."

"So where did you make love?"

"The way you do when you are children; in any place I could

persuade her to and especially in vehicles and conveyances."

"It must have been very bad for our friend, Mister X."

"It was."

"Was that all the love you made? Didn't you ever sleep a night together?"

"Never."

"Poor Tom. Was she worth all that trouble?"

"I don't know. I think so. I should have rented a house instead of staying on at the hotel."

"You should have rented a Sin House the way everyone does here."

"I don't like a Sin House."

"I know. But after all if you wanted the girl."

"The problem was solved another way. You're not bored?"

"No, Tom, please. Not now. How was the problem solved?"

"One night I had dinner with the girl and then we rode in a boat for a long time and that was wonderful but uncomfortable. She had skin that was wonderful to touch and all the preliminaries of making love made her very excited and her lips were thin but they were very heavy with love. Then we went from the boat to her house and the police dog was there and there was the problem of not waking anyone and finally I went to the hotel alone and I didn't feel good about any of it and I was tired of arguing and I knew she was right but I thought what the hell is the use of being so damned emancipated if you can't go to bed. I thought if we are going to be emancipated, let's free the sheets. Anyway I was feeling gloomy and *frustrado—"*

"I've never seen you *frustrado.* You must be funny *frustrado*."

"I'm not. I'm just mean and that night I felt mean and disgusted."

"Go on with the story."

"Well, I got my key at the desk very *frustrado* and the hell with everything. It was a very big and rich and richly gloomy hotel and I

rode up in the elevator to what I knew was my big and rich and gloomy and lonely room and no beautiful tall Chinese girl in it. So I walked down the corridor and unlocked the massive door of my gigantic gloomy room and then I saw what was there."

"What was it?"

"Three absolutely beautiful Chinese girls, so beautiful they made my beautiful Chinese girl that I couldn't get to bed seem like a schoolteacher. They were so beautiful you couldn't stand it and none of them spoke any English."

"Where were they from?"

"One of my millionaires sent them. One of them had a note for me on very thick paper in a parchment envelope. All it said was, 'Love from C.W.'"

"What did you do?"

"I didn't know their own customs so I shook hands with them and I kissed each one of them and then I told them that I thought the best way for all to get acquainted was to all take a shower."

"How did you tell them?" "In English."

"Did they understand?"

"I made them understand correctly."

"Then what did you do?"

"I was very embarrassed because I had never made love with three girls. Two girls is fun even though *you* do not like it. It's not twice as good as one girl but it is different, and it is fun anyway when you are drunk. But three girls is a lot of girls and I was embarrassed. So I asked them if they wanted a drink and they didn't. So I had a drink and we sat on the bed, which was, fortunately, a very big bed, although they were all very small, and then I turned the lights out."

"Was it fun?"

"It was wonderful. It was wonderful to be in bed with a Chinese girl who was just as smooth as the girl I knew, and much smoother, and who was both shy and shameless and not emancipated at all,

and then multiply that by three, and have it in the dark. I had never held three girls in my arms before. But you can do it. They had been trained and they knew many things I did not know and it was all in the dark and I did not want ever to go to sleep. But I did finally and when I woke in the morning they were all asleep and as beautiful as they had looked when I first came in the room. They were the most beautiful girls I ever saw."

"More beautiful than I was when you first knew me twenty-five years ago?"

"No, Lil. *No puede ser.* They were Chinese girls and you know how beautiful a Chinese girl can be. And I loved Chinese girls anyway."

"No es pervertido."

"No, it certainly isn't a perversion."

"But three."

"Three is several. And love was made to be made with one, I grant you."

"Anyway, I'm glad you had them. Don't think I'm jealous. You didn't seek it out and besides it was a present. I hate the police dog woman who wouldn't go to bed. But, Tom, didn't you feel hollow in the morning?"

"Of such hollowness you can't imagine. Really hollow. And I felt debauched from the top of my head to between my toes and my back was dead and the root of my spine ached."

"So you had a drink."

"So I had a drink and I felt a little better and very happy."

"So what did you do?"

"I looked at them all asleep and I wished I could take a picture of them. They would have made a wonderful picture asleep and I was so damned hungry and hollow feeling and I looked out through the curtains at the weather outside. It was raining. So I thought that was fine and we would stay in bed all day. But I had to have some breakfast and I had to figure out about breakfast for them. So I took

a shower with the door shut and then dressed very quietly and went out, closing the door so it made no noise at all. Downstairs I had breakfast in the early morning dining room of the hotel and I had a big breakfast of kippers, rolls and marmalade, and some mushrooms and bacon. All very good. I drank a big pot of tea and had a double whisky and soda with breakfast and still felt hollow inside. I read the Hong Kong morning English paper and wondered how late they slept. Finally I went out to the front door of the hotel and looked outside and it was still raining hard. I went to the bar but it was not yet open. They had brought me my drink at breakfast from the service bar. Then I couldn't wait any longer and I went back up to the room and unlocked the door. They were all gone."

"How terrible."

"That's what I thought."

"So what did you do? You had a drink I suppose."

"Yes. I had a drink and then I went in and washed myself again very good with much soap and water and then I commenced to have double remorse."

"¿Un doble remordimiento?"

"No. Two remorses. Remorse because I had slept with three girls. And remorse because they were gone."

"I remember when you used to have remorse after you stayed with me. But you got over it."

"I know. I always get over everything. I was always a man of big remorses. But this morning in the hotel was gigantic double remorse."

"So you took another drink."

"How did you guess it? And I called up my millionaire. But he wasn't at his home. Nor in his office."

"He must have been in his Sin House."

"Undoubtedly. Where the girls had gone to join him and to tell him about the night."

"But where did they get three such beautiful girls? You couldn't

get three really beautiful girls in all of Havana now. I know the trouble I had trying to get something even decent for Henry and Willie this morning. Though, naturally, it is a bad time of day."

"Oh, in Hong Kong the millionaires had scouts all through the country. All over China. It was just like the Brooklyn Dodgers' baseball team looking for ballplayers. As soon as a beautiful girl was located in any town or village their agents bought her and she was shipped in and trained and groomed and cared for."

"But how did they look so beautiful in the morning if they had coiffures *muy estilizado* such as Chinese women wear? The more *estilizado* the hairdress, the worse they would look in the morning after a night like that."

"They didn't have such coiffures. They wore their hair shoulder length the way American girls did that year and the way many still do. It was curled, too, very softly. That was the way C.W. liked them. He had been in America and, naturally, he had seen the cinema."

"Did you never have them again?"

"Only one at a time. C.W. would send me over one at a time as a present. But he never sent all three. They were new and naturally he wanted them for himself. And, too, he said he did not want to do anything that was bad for my morals."

"He sounds like a fine man. What happened to him?"

"I believe he was shot."

"Poor man. That was a nice story though and very delicate for a story like that. You seem more cheerful, too."

I guess I am, Thomas Hudson thought. Well, that is what I set out to be. Or was it?

"Look, Lil," he said. "Don't you think we've drunk maybe just about enough of these?"

"How do you feel?"

"Better."

"Make Tomás another double frozen without sugar. I'm getting a

little drunk. I don't want anything."

I do feel better, Thomas Hudson thought. That is the funny part. You always feel better and you always get over your remorse. There's only one thing you don't get over and that is death.

"You ever been dead?" he said to Lil.

"Of course not."

"*Yo tampoco.*"

"Why did you say that? You scare me when you talk like that."

"I don't mean to scare you, honey. I don't want to scare anybody ever."

"I like it when you call me honey."

This isn't getting anywhere, Thomas Hudson thought. Isn't there anything else you could do that would produce the same effect rather than sit with beat-up old Honest Lil in La Floridita at the old tarts' end of the bar and get drunk? If you only have four days couldn't you employ them better? Where?, he thought. At Alfred's Sin House? You're doing all right where you are. The drinking couldn't be any better, nor as good, anywhere in the world and you're down to the drinking now, kid, and you better get just as far in it as you can. That's what you've got now and you better like it and like it on all frequencies. You know you always liked it and you loved it and it's what you have now, so you better love it.

"I love it," he said out loud.

"What?"

"Drinking. Not just drinking. Drinking these double frozens without sugar. If you drank that many with sugar it would make you sick."

"Ya lo creo. And if anybody else drank that many without sugar they'd be dead."

"Maybe I'll be dead."

"No, you won't. You'll just break the record and then we'll go to my place and you'll go to sleep and the worst thing that will happen is if you snore."

“Did I snore last time?”

“Horrores. And you called me by about ten different names in the night.”

“I’m sorry.”

“No. I thought it was funny. I learned two or three things I didn’t know. Don’t your other girls ever get upset when you call them by so many different names?”

“I haven’t any other girls. Just a wife.”

“I try hard to like her and think well of her but it is very difficult. Naturally I never let anyone speak against her.”

“I’ll speak against her.”

“No. Don’t. That is vulgar. I hate two things. Men when they cry. I know they have to cry. But I don’t like it. And I hate to hear them speak against their wives. Yet they nearly all do. So don’t you do it, because we are having such a lovely time.”

“Good. The hell with her. We won’t speak about her.”

“Please, Tom. You know I think she is very beautiful. She is. Really. *Pero no es mujer para ti*. But let us not speak against her.”

“Right.”

“Tell me another happy story. It doesn’t even have to have love in it if it makes you happy to tell it.”

“I don’t think I know any happy stories.”

“Don’t be like that. You know thousands. Take another drink and tell me a happy story.”

“Why don’t you do some of the work?”

“What work?”

“The goddamnned morale building.”

“Tú tienes la moral muy baja.”

“Sure. I’m well aware of it. But why don’t you tell a few stories to build it up?”

“You have to do it yourself. You know that. I’ll do anything else you want me to. You know that.”

“OK,” Thomas Hudson said. “You really want another happy

story?"

"Please. There's your drink. One more happy story and one more drink and you'll feel good."

"You guarantee it?"

"No," she said and she began to cry again as she looked up at him, crying easily and naturally as water wells up in a spring. "Tom, why can't you tell me what's the matter? I'm afraid to ask now. Is that it?"

"That's it," Thomas Hudson said. Then she began to cry hard and he had to put his arm around her and try to comfort her with all of the people there at the bar. She was not crying beautifully now. She was crying straight and destructively.

"Oh my poor Tom," she said. "Oh my poor Tom."

"Pull yourself together, *mujer,* and drink a brandy. Now we are going to be cheerful."

"Oh, I don't want to be cheerful now. I'll never be cheerful again."

"Look," Thomas Hudson said. "You see how much good it does to tell people things?"

"I'll be cheerful," she said. "Just give me a minute. I'll go out to the ladies and I'll be all right."

You damned well better be, Thomas Hudson thought. Because I'm feeling really bad and if you don't quit crying, or if you talk about it, I'll pull the hell out of here. And if I pull the hell out of here where the hell else have I got to go? He was aware of the limitations, and no one's Sin House was the answer.

"Give me another double frozen daiquiri without sugar. *No sé lo que pasa con esta mujer."*

"She cries like a sprinkling can," the barman said. "They ought to have her instead of the aqueduct."

"How's the aqueduct coming?" Thomas Hudson asked.

The man next to him on his left at the bar, a short, cheerful-faced man with a broken nose whose face he knew well but whose

name and whose politics escaped him said, “Those *cabrones.* They can always get money for water since water is the one great necessity. Everything else is necessary. But water there is no substitute for and you cannot do without some water. So they can always get money to bring water. So there will never be a proper aqueduct.”

“I’m not sure I follow you completely.”

“*Sí, hombre.* They can always get money for an aqueduct because an aqueduct is absolutely necessary. Therefore they cannot afford an aqueduct. Would you kill the goose that lays the golden aqueduct?”

“Why not build the aqueduct and make some money out of it and find another *truco?”*

“There’s no trick like water. You can always get money for the promise to produce water. No politician would destroy a *truco* like that by building an adequate aqueduct. Aspirant politicians occasionally shoot one another in the lowest levels of politics. But no politician would so strike at the true basis of political economy. Let me propose a toast to the Custom House, a lottery racket, the free numbers racket, the fixed price of sugar, and the eternal lack of an aqueduct.”

“Prosit,” Thomas Hudson said.

“You’re not German, are you?”

“No. American.”

“Then let us drink to Roosevelt, Churchill, Batista, and the lack of an aqueduct.”

“To Stalin.”

“Certainly. To Stalin, Central Hershey, marijuana, and the lack of an aqueduct.”

“To Adolphe Luque.”

“To Adolphe Luque, to Adolf Hitler, to Philadelphia, to Gene Tunney, to Key West, and to the lack of an aqueduct.”

Honest Lil came in to the bar from the ladies room while they

were talking. She had repaired her face and she was not crying but you could see she had been hit.

"Do you know this gentleman?" Thomas Hudson said to her, introducing his new friend, or his old friend newly found.

"Only in bed," the gentleman said.

"Cállate," Honest Lil said. "He's a politician," she explained to Thomas Hudson. *"Muy hambriento en este momento*."

"Thirsty," the politician corrected. "And at your orders," he said to Thomas Hudson. "What will you have?"

"A double frozen daiquiri without sugar. Should we roll for them?"

"No. Let me buy them. I have unlimited credit here."

"He's a good man," Honest Lil said to Thomas Hudson in a whisper while the other was attracting the attention of the nearest barman. "A politician. But very honest and very cheerful."

The man put his arm around Lil. "You're thinner every day, *mi vida,"* he said. "We must belong to the same political party."

"To the aqueduct," Thomas Hudson said.

"My God, no. What are you trying to do? Take the bread out of our mouths and put water in?"

"Let's drink to when the *puta guerra* will finish," Lil said.

"Drink."

"To the black market," the man said. "To the cement shortage. To those who control the supply of black beans."

"Drink," Thomas Hudson said and added, "To rice."

"To rice," the politician said.

"Drink."

"Do you feel better?" Honest Lil asked.

"Sure."

He looked at her and saw she was going to start to cry again.

"You cry again," he said, "and I'll break your jaw."

There was a lithographed poster behind the bar of a politician in white suit and the slogan" *Un Alcalde Mejor,"* a better mayor. It was

a big poster and the better mayor stared straight into the eyes of every drinker.

"To *Un Alcalde Peor,"* the politician said. "To A Worse Mayor."

"Will you run?" Thomas Hudson asked him.

"Absolutely."

"That's wonderful," Honest Lil said. "Let's draw up our platform."

"It isn't difficult," the candidate said. *"Uu Alcalde Peor.* We've got a winning slogan. What do we need a platform for?"

"We ought to have a platform," Lil said. "Don't you think so, Tomás?"

"I think so. What about Down with the Rural Schools?"

"Down," said the candidate.

"Menos guaguas y peores," Honest Lil suggested.

"Good. Fewer and worse buses."

"Why not do away with transport entirely?" suggested the candidate. *"Es más sencillo."*

"Okay," Thomas Hudson said. *"Cero transporte."*

"Short and noble," the candidate said. "And it shows we are impartial. But we could elaborate it. What about *Cero transporte aéreo, terrestre, y marítimo?"*

"Wonderful. We're getting a real platform. How do we stand on leprosy?"

"Por una lepra más grande para Cuba," said the candidate.

"Por el cáncer cubano," Thomas Hudson said.

"Por una tuberculosis ampliada, adecuada, y permanente para Cuba y los cubanos," said the candidate. "That's a little bit long but it will sound good on the radio. Where do we stand on syphilis, my coreligionists?"

"Por una sífilis criolla cien por cien."

"Good," said the candidate. "Down with *Penicilina* and other tricks of *Yanqui* Imperialism."

"Down," said Thomas Hudson.

“It seems to me as though we ought to drink something,” Honest Lil said. “How does it seem to you, *correligionarios?”*

“A magnificent idea,” said the candidate. “Who but you could have had an idea like that?”

“You,” Honest Lil said.

“Attack my credit,” the candidate said. “Let’s see how my credit stands up under really heavy fire. Bar-chap, bar-fellow, boy: the same all around. And for this political associate of mine: without sugar.”

“That’s an idea for a slogan,” Honest Lil said. “Cuba’s Sugar for Cubans.”

“Down with the Colossus of the North,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Down,” repeated the others.

“We need more domestic slogans, more municipal slogans. We shouldn’t get too much into the international field while we are fighting a war and are still allies.”

“Still I think we ought to Down the Colossus of the North,” Thomas Hudson said. “It’s really an ideal time while the Colossus is fighting a global war. I think we ought to down him.”

“We’ll down him after I’m elected.”

“To *Un Alcalde Peor,”* Thomas Hudson said.

“To All of Us. To the party,” the Alcalde Peor said. He raised his glass.

“We must remember the circumstances of the founding of the party and write out the manifesto. What’s the date anyway?”

“The twentieth. More or less.”

“The twentieth of what?”

“The twentieth more or less of February. *El grito de La Floridita.”*

“It’s a solemn moment,” Thomas Hudson said. “Can you write, Honest Lil? Can you perpetuate all this?”

“I can write. But I can’t write right now.”

“There are a few more problems we have to take a stand on,” the Alcalde Peor said. “Listen, Colossus of the North, why don’t you

buy this round? You've seen how valiant my credit is and how he stands up to the attack. But there's no need to kill the poor bird when we know he's losing. Come on, Colossus."

"Don't call me Colossus. We're against the damn Colossus."

"All right, governor. What do you do, anyway?"

"I'm a scientist."

"Sobre todo en la cama" Honest Lil said. "He made extensive studies in China."

"Well, whatever you are, buy this one," the Alcalde Peor said. "And let's get on with the platform."

"What about the Home?"

"A sacred subject. The Home enjoys equal dignity with religion. We must be careful and subtle. What about this: *Abajo los padres de familias?"*

"It has dignity. But why not just: Down with the Home?"

"Abajo el Home. It's a beautiful sentiment but many might confuse it with *béisbol."*

"What about Little Children?"

"Suffer them to come unto me once they are of electoral age," said the Alcalde Peor.

"What about divorce?" Thomas Hudson asked.

"Another touchy problem," the Alcalde Peor said. *"Bastante espinoso.* How do you feel about divorce?"

"Perhaps we shouldn't take up divorce. It conflicts with our campaign in favor of the Home."

"All right, let's drop it. Now let me see—"

"You can't," Honest Lil said. "You're cockeyed."

"Don't criticize me, woman," the Alcalde Peor told her. "One thing we must do."

"What?"

"Orinar."

"I agree," Thomas Hudson heard himself saying. "It is basic."

"As basic as the lack of the aqueduct. It is founded on water."

“It’s founded on alcohol.”

“Only a small percentage in comparison with the water. Water is the basic thing. You are a scientist. What percentage of water are we composed of?”

“Eighty-seven and three-tenths,” said Thomas Hudson, taking a chance and knowing he was wrong.

“Exactly,” said the Alcalde Peor. “Should we go while we can still move?”

In the men’s room a calm and noble Negro was reading a Rosicrucian pamphlet. He was working on the weekly lesson of the course he was taking. Thomas Hudson greeted him with dignity and his greeting was returned in kind.

“Quite a chilly day, sir,” the attendant with the religious literature observed.

“It is indeed chilly,” Thomas Hudson said. “How are your studies progressing?”

“Very well, sir. As well as can be expected.”

“I’m delighted,” Thomas Hudson said. Then to the Alcalde Peor, who was having certain difficulties, “I belonged to a club in London once where half the members were trying to urinate and the other half were trying to stop.”

“Very good,” said the Alcalde Peor, completing his chore, “What did they call it, *El Club Mundial?”*

“No. As a matter of fact, I’ve forgotten the name of it.”

“You’ve forgotten the name of your club?”

“Yes. Why not?”

“I think we better go get another one. How much does this urination cost?”

“Whatever you wish, sir.”

“Let me get them,” Thomas Hudson said. “I love to buy them. It’s like flowers.”

“Could it have been the Royal Automobile Club?” the Negro asked, standing proffering a towel.

“It could not have been.”

“I’m sorry, sir,” the student of Rosicrucian said. “I know that’s one of the biggest clubs in London.”

“That’s right,” Thomas Hudson said. “One of the biggest. Now buy yourself something very handsome with this.” He gave him a dollar.

“Why did you give him a peso?” the Alcalde Peor asked him as they were outside the door and back to the noise of the bar, the restaurant, and the traffic on the street outside.

“I have no real use for it.”

“*Hombre,”* the Alcalde Peor said. “Are you feeling all right? Do you feel OK?”

“Quite,” said Thomas Hudson. “I’m quite OK, thank you very much.”

“How was the trip?” Honest Lil asked from her stool at the bar. Thomas Hudson looked at her and saw her again for the first time. She looked considerably darker and much wider.

“It was a nice trip,” he said. “You always meet interesting people when you travel.”

Honest Lil put her hand on his thigh and squeezed it and he was looking down the bar, away from Honest Lil, past the Panama hats, the Cuban faces, and the moving dice cups of the drinkers and out the open door into the bright light of the square, when he saw the car pull up and the doorman opened the rear door, his cap in his hand, and she got out.

It was her. No one else got out of a car that way, practically and easily and beautifully and at the same time as though she were doing the street a great favor when she stepped on it. Everyone had tried to look like her for many years and some came quite close. But when you saw her, all the people that looked like her were only imitations. She was in uniform now and she smiled at the doorman and asked him a question and he answered happily and nodded his head and she started across the sidewalk and into the bar. There

was another woman in uniform behind her.

Thomas Hudson stood up and he felt as though his chest was being constricted so that he could not breathe. She had seen him and she was walking down through the gap between the people at the bar and the tables toward him. The other woman was following behind her.

"Excuse me," he said to Honest Lil and to the Alcalde Peor.

"I have to see a friend."

They met halfway down the free corridor between the bar and the tables and he was holding her in his arms. They were both holding hard and tight as people can hold and he was kissing her hard and well and she was kissing him and feeling both his arms with her hands.

"Oh you. You. You," she said.

"You devil," he said. "How did you get here?"

"From Camagüey, of course."

People were looking at them and he picked her off her feet and held her tight against him and kissed her once more then put her down and took her hand and started for a table in the corner.

"We can't do that here," he said. "We'll get arrested."

"Let's get arrested," she said. "This is Ginny. She's my secretary."

"Hi, Ginny," Thomas Hudson said. "Let's get this mad woman behind that table."

Ginny was a nice, ugly girl. They were both wearing the same uniform; officers' blouses without insignia, shirts and ties, skirts, stockings, and brogues. They had overseas caps and a patch on their left shoulders he had not seen before.

"Take your cap off, devil."

"I'm not supposed to."

"Take it off."

"All right."

She took it off and lifted her face and shook her hair loose and

moved her head back and looked at him and he saw the high forehead, the magic rolling line of the hair that was the same silvery ripe-wheat color as always, the high cheekbones with the hollows just below them, the hollows that could always break your heart, the slightly flattened nose, and the mouth he had just left that was disarranged by the kissing, and the lovely chin and throat line.

"How do I look?"

"You know."

"Did you ever kiss anybody in these clothes before? Or scratch yourself on army buttons?"

"No."

"Do you love me?"

"I always love you."

"No. Do you love me right now. This minute."

"Yes," he said and his throat ached.

"That's good," she said. "It would be pretty awful for you if you didn't."

"How long are you here for?"

"Just today."

"Let me kiss you."

"You said we'd be arrested."

"We can wait. What do you want to drink?"

"Do they have good champagne?"

"Yes. But there's an awfully good local drink."

"There must be. About how many of them have you had?"

"I don't know. About a dozen."

"You only look tight around the eyes. Are you in love with anyone?"

"No. You?"

"We'll have to see. Where is your bitch of a wife?"

"In the Pacific."

"I wish she was. About a thousand fathoms deep. Oh, Tommy,

Tommy, Tommy, Tommy, Tommy."

"Are you in love with anyone?"

"I'm afraid so."

"You bastard."

"Isn't it terrible? The first time I ever meet you since I went away and you're not in love with anyone and I'm in love with someone."

"You went away?"

"That's my story."

"Is he nice?"

"He's nice, this one, like children are nice. I'm very necessary to him."

"Where is he?"

"That's a military secret."

"Is that where you're going?"

"Yes."

"What are you?"

"We're USO."

"Is that the same as OSS?"

"No, goofy. Don't pretend to be stupid and don't be stuffy just because I love someone. You never consult me when you fall in love with people."

"How much do you love him?"

"I didn't say I loved him. I said I was in love with him. I won't even be in love with him today if you don't want. I'm only here for a day. I don't want not to be polite."

"Go to hell," he said.

"How would it be if I took the car and went to the hotel?" Ginny asked.

"No, Ginny. We're going to have some champagne first. Do you have a car?" she asked Thomas Hudson.

"Yeah. Outside on the square."

"Can we drive out to your place?"

“Of course. We can eat and then go out. Or I can pick up something for us to eat out there.”

“Weren’t we lucky that we could get here?”

“Yes,” Thomas Hudson said. “How did you know anyone was here?”

“A boy at the field at Camagüey told me you might be here. If we didn’t find you, we were going to see Havana.”

“We can see Havana.”

“No,” she said. “Ginny can see it. Do you know anybody who could take Ginny out?”

“Sure.”

“We have to get back to Camagüey tonight.”

“What time does your plane leave?”

“Six o’clock, I think.”

“We’ll fix everything up,” Thomas Hudson said.

A man came over to the table. He was a local boy.

“Pardon me,” he said. “May I have your autograph?”

“Of course.”

He gave her a card with the picture of the bar on it with Constante standing behind it making a cocktail and she signed with the overlarge theatrical writing Thomas Hudson knew so well.

“It’s not for my little daughter or my son who is in school,” the man said. “It’s for me.”

“Good,” she said and smiled at him. “You were very nice to ask me.”

“I’ve seen all of your pictures,” the man said. “I think you are the most beautiful woman in the world.”

“That’s wonderful,” she said. “Please keep on thinking that.”

“Would you let me buy you a drink?”

“I’m drinking with a friend.”

“I know him,” the radio announcer said. “I’ve known him for many years. May I sit down, Tom? There is an extra lady here.”

“This is Mr. Rodríguez,” Thomas Hudson said. “What’s your last

name, Ginny?"

"Watson."

"Miss Watson."

"I'm delighted to know you, Miss Watson," the radio announcer said. He was a good-looking man, dark and tanned with pleasant eyes, a nice smile, and the big good hands of a ball player. He had been both a gambler and a ball player and he had some of the good looks of the modern gambler left.

"Could you all three have lunch with me?" he asked. "It is nearly lunchtime now."

"Mr. Hudson and I have to make a trip into the country," she said.

"I'd love to have lunch with you," Ginny said. "I think you're wonderful."

"Is he all right?" she asked Thomas Hudson.

"He's a fine man. As good as you'll find in town."

"Thank you very much, Tom," the man said. "You are sure you won't all eat with me?"

"We really have to go," she said. "We're late now. Then I'll see you at the hotel, Ginny. Thank you so much, Mr. Rodríguez."

"You really are the most beautiful woman in the world," Mr. Rodríguez said. "If I hadn't always known it, I know it now."

"Please keep on thinking so," she said and then they were out in the street.

"Well," she said. "That wasn't too bad. Ginny likes him, too, and he's nice."

"He *is* nice," Thomas Hudson said and the chauffeur opened the door of the car for them.

"You're nice," she said. "I wish you hadn't had quite so many drinks. That's why I skipped the champagne. Who was your dark friend at the end of the bar?"

"Just my dark friend at the end of the bar."

"Do you need a drink? We could stop somewhere and get one."

“No. Do you?”

“You know I never do. I’d like some wine though.”

“I have wine out at the house.”

“That’s wonderful. Now you can kiss me. They won’t arrest us now.”

“¿Adondé vamos?” the chauffeur asked looking straight ahead.

“A la finca,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Oh, Tommy, Tommy, Tommy,” she said. “Go right ahead. It doesn’t make any difference if he sees us, does it?”

“No. It makes no difference. You can cut his tongue out if you like.”

“No, I don’t want to. Nor nothing brutal ever. But you were nice to offer it.”

“It wouldn’t be a bad idea. How are you? You old love-house of always.”

“I’m the same.”

“Really the same?”

“The same as one always is. I’m yours in this town.”

“Until the plane leaves.”

“Exactly,” she said and changed her position for the better in the car. “Look,” she said. “We’ve left the shining part and it’s dirty and smoky. When didn’t we do that?”

“Sometimes.”

“Yes,” she said. “Sometimes.”

Then they looked at the dirty and the smoky and her quick eyes and lovely intelligence saw everything instantly that had taken him so many years to see.

“Now it gets better,” she said. She had never told him a lie in his life and he had tried to never lie to her. But he had been quite unsuccessful.

“Do you still love me?” she asked. “Tell me true without adornments.”

“Yes. You ought to know.”

“I know,” she said, holding him to prove it if it could prove it.

“Who is the man now?”

“Let’s not talk about him. You wouldn’t care for him.”

“Maybe not,” he said and held her so close that it was as though something must break if both were truly serious. It was their old game and she broke and the break was clean.

“You don’t have breasts,” she said. “And you always win.”

“I don’t have a face to break your heart. Nor what you have and the long lovely legs.”

“You have something else.”

“Yes,” he said. “Last night with a pillow and a cat making love.”

“I’ll make up for the cat. How far is it now?”

“Eleven minutes.”

“That’s too far the way things are now.”

“Should I take it from him and drive it in eight?”

“No, please, and remember everything I taught you about patience.”

“That was the most intelligent and stupid lesson I learned. Reteach it to me a little now.”

“Do I have to?”

“No. It is only eight minutes now.”

“Will it be a nice place and will the bed be big?”

“We will have to see,” Thomas Hudson said. “Are you starting to have your old doubts already?”

“No,” she said. “I want a big, big bed. To forget all about the army.”

“There is a big bed,” he said. “Maybe not as big as the army.”

“You don’t have to be rough,” she said. “All the beautiful ones end up showing pictures of their wives. You should know the Airbornes.”

“I’m glad I don’t. We’re a little waterlogged. But we were never waterborne nor said so.”

“Can you tell me anything about it?” she asked him, her hand

now soundly in his pocket.

"No."

"You never would and I love you for it. But I get curious and people ask me and I worry."

"Just be curious," he said. "And never worry. Don't you remember that curiosity killed a cat? I've got a cat and he's curious enough." He thought of Boise. Then he said, "But worry kills big businessmen right in their prime. Do I have to worry about you?"

"Only as an actress. Then not too much. Now it's only two minutes more. It's nice country now and I like it. Can we have lunch in bed?"

"Can we go to sleep then, too?"

"Yes. It's not a sin, if we don't miss the plane."

The car climbed steeply now on the old stone-paved road with the big trees on either side.

"Have you anything to miss?"

"You," he said.

"I mean duty."

"Did I look as though I were on duty?"

"You might be. You're a wonderful actor. The worst I ever saw. I love you, my dear crazy," she said. "I've seen you play all your great roles. The one I loved you the best in was when you were playing the Faithful Husband and you were doing it so wonderfully and there was a big spot of natural juices showed on your trousers and every time you looked at me it was bigger. That was in the Ritz, I think."

"That was where I played the Faithful Husband best," he said. "Like Garrick at the Old Bailey."

"You're a little confused," she said. "I think you played it best on the *Normandie."*

"When they burned her I didn't give a damn about anything for six days."

"That's not your record."

"No," he said.

They were stopped at the gate now and the chauffeur was unlocking it.

"Do we really live here?"

"Yes. Up the hill. I'm sorry the drive's in such bad shape." The car climbed it through the mango trees and the unflowering *flamboyanes,* turned past the cattle sheds and on up the circular drive to the house. He opened the door of the car and she stepped out as though conferring a warm and generous favor to the ground.

She looked at the house and could see the open windows of the bedroom. They were big windows and in some way it reminded her of the *Normandie.*

"I'll miss the plane," she said. "Why can't I be ill? All the other women are ill."

"I know two good doctors that will swear you are."

"Wonderful," she said, going up the stairs. "We won't have to ask them to dinner, will we?"

"No," he said, opening the door, "I'll call them up and send the chauffeur for the certificates."

"I am ill," she said. "I've decided. Let the troops entertain themselves for once."

"You'll go."

"No. I'm going to entertain you. Have you been entertained properly lately?"

"No."

"Me either, or is it neither?"

"I don't know," he said and held her close and looked in her eyes and then away. He opened the door to the big bedroom. "It's neither," he said reflectively.

The windows were open and the wind was in the room. But it was pleasant now with the sun.

"It *is* like the *Normandie.* Did you make it like the *Normandie* for me?"

"Of course, darling," he lied. "What did you think?"

"You're a worse liar than I am."

"I'm not even faster."

"Let's not lie. Let's pretend you made it for me."

"I made it for you," he said. "Only it looked like someone else."

"Is that as hard as you can hold anyone?"

"Without breaking them." Then he said, "Without lying down."

"Who is against lying down?"

"Not me," he said and picked her up and carried her to the bed.

"Let me drop the jalousie. I don't mind your entertaining the troops. But we have a radio that entertains the kitchen. They don't need us."

"Now," she said.

"Yes."

"Now remember everything I ever taught you."

"Aren't I?"

"Now and then."

"Then," he said. "Where did we know him?"

"We met him. Don't you remember?"

"Look, let's not remember anything and let's not talk and let's not talk and let's not talk."

Afterwards she said, "People used to get hungry even on the *Normandie."*

"I'll ring for the steward."

"But this steward doesn't know us."

"He will."

"No. Let's go out and see the house. What have you painted?"

"What all nothing."

"Don't you have time?"

"What do you think?"

"But couldn't you when you're ashore?"

"What do you mean ashore?"

"Tom," she said. They were in the living room now in the big

old chairs and she had taken her shoes off to feel the matting on the floor. She sat curled in the chair and she had brushed her hair to please him, and because of what she knew it did to him, and she sat so it swung like a heavy silken load when her head moved.

"Damn you," he said. "Darling," he added.

"You damned me enough," she said.

"Let's not talk about it."

"Why did you marry her, Tom?"

"Because you were in love."

"It wasn't a very good reason."

"Nobody ever said it was. Especially not me. But I don't have to make my errors and repent of them and then discuss them, do I?"

"If I want you to."

The big black and white cat had come in and he rubbed against her leg.

"He's got us mixed up," Thomas Hudson said. "Or maybe he's getting good sense."

"It couldn't be—?"

"Sure. Of course. Boy," he called.

The cat came over to him and jumped into his lap. It did not matter which one it was.

"We might as well both love her, Boy. Take a good look at her. You'll never see any more womens like that."

"Is he the one you sleep with?"

"Yes. Is there any reason why I shouldn't?"

"None. I like him better than the man I sleep with now and he's just about as sad."

"Do we have to talk about him?"

"No. And you don't have to pretend you haven't been at sea when your eyes are burned and there are white slit marks in the corners of them and your hair is as sun-streaked as though you used something on it—"

"And I walk with a rolling gait and carry a parrot on my

shoulder and hit people with my wooden leg. Look, darling, I go to sea occasionally because I am a painter of marine life for the Museum of Natural History. Not even war must interfere with our studies."

"They are sacred," she said. "I'll remember that lie and stick with it. Tom, you truly don't care for her at all?"

"Not at all."

"You still love me?"

"Didn't I give any signs of it?"

"It could have been a role. The one of the always faithful lover no matter what whores I find you with. Thee hasn't been faithful to me, Cynara, in thy fashion."

"I always told you that you were too literate for your own good. I was through with that poem when I was nineteen."

"Yes, and I always told you that if you would paint and work at it as you should, instead of making fantasies and falling in love with other people—"

"Marrying them, you mean."

"No. Marrying them is bad enough. But you fall in love with them and then I don't respect you."

"That's that old lovely one I remember. 'And then I don't respect you.' I'll buy that one at any price you put on it and take it out of circulation."

"I respect you. And you don't love her, do you?"

"I love you and respect you and I don't love her."

"That's wonderful. I'm so glad I'm so ill and that I missed the plane."

"I really do respect you, you know, and I respect every damned fool thing you do or did."

"And you treat me wonderfully and keep all your promises."

"What was the last one?"

"I don't know. If it was a promise you broke it."

"Would you want to skip it, beauty?"

“I’d like to have skipped it.”

“Maybe we could. We skipped most things.”

“No. That’s untrue. There’s visible evidence on that. But you think making love to a woman is enough. You never think about her wanting to be proud of you. Nor about small tendernesses.’

“Nor about being a baby like the men you love and care for.”

“Couldn’t you be more needing and make me necessary and not be so damned give it and take it and take it away I’m not hungry.”

“What did we come out here for? Moral lectures?”

“We came out here because I love you and I want you to be worthy of yourself.”

“And of you and God and all other abstractions. I’m not even an abstract painter. You’d have asked Toulouse-Lautrec to keep away from brothels and Gauguin not to get the syphilis and Baudelaire to get home early. I’m not as good as they were but the hell with you.”

“I never was like that.”

“Sure you were. Along with your work. Your goddamn hours of work.”

“I would have given it up.”

“Sure, I know you would. And sung in night clubs and I could be the bouncer. Do you remember when we planned that?”

“What have you heard from Tom?”

“He’s fine,” the man said and felt the strange prickling go over his skin.

“He hasn’t written me in three weeks. You’d think he’d write his mother. He always was so good about writing.”

“You know how it is with kids in a war. Or maybe they’re holding up all mail. Sometimes they do.”

“Do you remember when he couldn’t speak any English?”

“And he had his gang at Gstaad? And up in the Engadine and at Zug?”

“Do you have any new pictures of him?”

“Only that one you have.”

“Could we have a drink? What do you drink here?”

“Anything you want. I’ll go and find the boy. The wine is in the cellar.”

“Please don’t be gone long.”

“That’s a funny thing to say to each other.”

“Please don’t be gone long,” she repeated. “Did you hear it? And I never asked you to get in early. That wasn’t the trouble and you know it.”

“I know it,” he said. “And I won’t be gone long.”

“Maybe the boy could make something to eat, too.”

“Maybe he could,” Thomas Hudson said. Then to the cat, “You stay with her, Boise.”

Now, he thought. Why did I say that? Why did I lie? Why did I do that breaking it gently thing? Did I want to keep my grief for myself, as Willie said? Am I that sort of guy?

Well, you did it, he thought. How do you tell a mother that her boy is dead when you’ve just made love to her again? How do you tell yourself your boy is dead? You used to know all the answers. Answer me that.

There aren’t any answers. You should know that by now. There aren’t any answers at all.

“Tom,” her voice called. “I’m lonely and the cat isn’t you, even though he thinks he is.”

“Put him on the floor. The boy’s gone to the village and I’m getting ice.”

“I don’t care about the drink.”

“Neither do I,” he said and came back into the room walking on the tiled floor until he felt the matting. He looked at her and she was still there.

“You don’t want to talk about him,” she said.

“No.”

“Why? I think it’s better.”

“He looks too much like you.”

“That isn’t it,” she said. “Tell me. Is he dead?”

“Sure.”

“Please hold me tight. I *am* ill now.” He felt her shaking and he knelt by the chair and held her and felt her tremble. Then she said, “And poor you. Poor, poor you.”

After a time she said, “I’m sorry for everything I ever did or said.”

“Me, too.”

“Poor you and poor me.”

“Poor everybody,” he said and did not add, “Poor Tom.”

“What can you tell me?”

“Nothing. Just that.”

“I suppose we’ll learn how to take it.”

“Maybe.”

“I wish I could break down but I’m just hollow sick.”

“I know.”

“Does it happen to everybody?”

“I suppose so. Anyway it can only happen to us once.”

“And now it’s like in a house of the dead.”

“I’m sorry I didn’t tell you when I saw you.”

“That’s all right,” she said. “You always put things off. I’m not sorry.”

“I wanted you so damned much and I was selfish and stupid.”

“You weren’t selfish. We always loved each other. We only made mistakes.”

“I made the worst ones.”

“No. We both made them. Let’s not fight any more ever, though.” Something was happening to her and then finally she cried and said, “Oh, Tommy, all of a sudden I just can’t stand it.”

“I know,” he said. “My sweet good lovely beauty. I can’t stand it either.”

“We were so young and stupid and we were both beautiful and Tommy was so damned beautiful—”

“Like his mother.”

“And now there’ll never be any visible evidence.”

“My poor dearest love.”

“And what will we do?”

“You do what you’re doing and I’ll do what I’m doing.”

“Couldn’t we be together for a while?”

“Only if this wind keeps up.”

“Then let it blow. Do you think making love is wicked?”

“I don’t think Tom would disapprove.”

“No. Surely no.”

“Do you remember skiing with him on your shoulders and how we’d sing coming down through the orchard behind the inn in the dusk?”

“I remember everything.”

“So do I,” she said. “And why were we so stupid?”

“We were rivals as well as lovers.”

“I know it and we shouldn’t have been. But you don’t love anyone else, do you? Now that that’s all we have?”

“No. Truly.”

“I don’t either really. Do you think we could take each other back?”

“I don’t know whether it would work. We could try it.”

“How long will the war be?”

“Ask the man who owns one.”

“Will it be years?”

“A couple, anyway.”

“Are you liable to be killed too?”

“Very.”

“That’s not good.”

“And if I’m not?”

“I don’t know. Now Tom’s gone we wouldn’t start being bitter and bad again?”

“I could try not to. I’m not bitter and I’ve learned how to handle

the bad. Really."

"What? With whores?"

"I guess so. But I wouldn't need them if we were together."

"You always did put things so prettily."

"See? Let's not start it."

"No. Not in the house of the dead."

"You said that once."

"I know," she said. "I'm sorry. But I don't know how to put it any other way and mean the same thing. It's started to get numb already."

"It will get number," he said. "Numb is as bad as at the start. But it will get number."

"Will you tell me every bad thing you know about it so mine will get numb quicker?"

"Sure," he said. "Christ, I love you."

"You always did," she said. "Now tell me."

He was sitting at her feet and he did not look at her. He looked at Boise the cat, who was lying in a patch of sunlight on the matting. "He was shot down by a flak ship in a routine sweep off Abbeville."

"Did he bailout?"

"No. The kite burned. He must have been hit."

"I hope he was," she said. "I hope so much he was."

"It's almost sure he was. He had time to bailout."

"You're telling me the truth? His chute didn't burn?"

"No," he lied, thinking that was enough for today.

"Who did you hear it from?"

He told her the name of the man. "Then it's true," she said. "I don't have a son anymore and neither do you. I suppose we can learn about that. Do you know anything else?"

"No," he told her, as truly as possible.

"And we just go on?"

"That's it."

“With what?”

“With nothing,” he said.

“Couldn’t I stay here and be with you?”

“I don’t think it would be any good because I have to go out as soon as the weather is possible. You never talk and you bury anything I tell you. So bury that.”

“But I could be with you until then and I could wait until you’re back.”

“That’s no good,” he said. “I never know when we’ll be back and it would be worse for you not working. Stay if you want until we go.”

“Good,” she said. “I’ll stay until you go and we’ll think of Tom all we want. And we’ll make love as soon as you think it’s right.”

“Tommy never had anything to do with that room.”

“No. And I’ll exorcise anyone who ever did.”

“Now we really should eat something and drink a glass of wine.”

“A bottle,” she said. “Wasn’t Tom a lovely boy? And so funny and good.”

“What are you made of?”

“What you love,” she said. “And steel added.”

“I don’t know what’s become of the house boys,” Thomas Hudson told her. “They didn’t expect me back today. But one boy is supposed to be on the telephone. I’ll get the wine. It’s cold now.”

He opened the bottle and poured two glasses. It was the good wine he saved for coming-homes, after he had cooled out, and it bubbled small and neat and faithfully.

“Here’s to us and all our mistakes and all our losses and the gains we’ll make.”

“Made,” he said.

“Made,” she said. Then she said, “The one thing you were always faithful to was good wine.”

“Admirable of me, wasn’t it?”

“I’m sorry I said it about the drinking this morning.”

“Those things are good for me. It’s funny, but they are.”

“You mean what you were drinking? Or the criticism?”

“What I was drinking. The tall frozen ones.”

“Maybe they are. And I don’t make any criticism now except that it is awfully hard to get something to eat in this house.”

“Be patient. You’ve told me that enough times.”

“I’m patient,” she said. “I’m just hungry. I know now why people eat at wakes and before funerals.”

“Be as rough with it as is good for you.”

“Don’t worry. I’ll be. Are we going to go on saying we’re sorry for everything? I said it once.”

“Listen, you,” he said. “I’ve had this thing three weeks longer than you and maybe I’m in a different phase.”

“You’d have a different and more interesting phase,” she said. “I know you. Why don’t you just get back to your whores?”

“Wouldn’t you like to stop it?”

“No. It makes me feel better.”

“Who was it said, ‘Mary, pity women’?”

“Some man,” she said. “Some bastard of a man.”

“Do you want to hear the whole poem?”

“No. And I’m tired of you already and you knowing it three weeks earlier and all that. Just because I’m a non-combatant and you’re in something so secret you have to sleep with a cat so you won’t talk—”

“And you still don’t see why we broke up?”

“We broke up because I got tired of you. You’ve always loved me and you couldn’t help it and you can’t help it now.”

“That’s true.”

The house boy was standing in the dining room. He had unavoidably seen and heard quarrels in the living room before and they made his brown face perspire with unhappiness. He loved his master and the cats and dogs and he admired the beautiful women respectfully and it made him feel terrible when there were quarrels.

He thought that he had never seen such a beautiful woman and the caballero was quarreling with her and she was saying angry things to the caballero.

"Señor," he said. "Pardon me. May I speak to you in the kitchen?"

"Excuse me please, darling."

"I suppose it's something mysterious," she said and poured her glass full of wine.

"Señor," the boy said. "The Lieutenant spoke in *castellano* and he said for you to come in immediately repeat immediately. He said you would know where and that it was a business matter. I did not wish to call on our phone and I called from the village. Then they told me you were here."

"Good," said Thomas Hudson. "Thank you very much. Please fry some eggs for the señorita and me and tell the chauffeur to have the car ready."

"Yes sir," the boy said.

"What was it, Tom?" she asked. "Is it bad?"

"I have to go to work."

"But you said you wouldn't have to with this wind."

"I know it. But it's out of my hands."

"Do you want me to stay here?"

"You can stay and read Tom's letters if you like and the chauffeur will take you to your plane."

"All right."

"You can take the letters with you, too, if you want and any pictures or anything you see. Go through my desk."

"You *are* changed."

"Maybe a little," he said.

"Go out to the studio and look at any of the stuff," he said. "There are some good ones from before we started this project. Take anything you like. There's a good one of you."

"I'll take it," she said. "You're awfully good when you're good."

“Read the letters from her if you like. Some of them are museum pieces. Take any along that are comic enough.”

“You sound as though I travelled with a trunk.”

“You can read them and then drop them out of the john in the plane.”

“All right.”

“I’ll try to get back before you go. But don’t count on it. If I have to use the chauffeur I’ll send a taxi to take you to the hotel or the airport.”

“Good.”

“The boy will look after you. He can do any pressing for you and you can use any clothes of mine or anything you find around.”

“Good. Will you try to love me, Tom, and not let anything like that last one ruin it?”

“Sure. They don’t mean anything and you pointed out I couldn’t help it.”

“Try and not be able to help it.”

“It’s out of my hands. Take any books you want or anything you find around the joint and give my eggs or one anyway to Boise. He likes them cut up small. I better shove. There’s been a time lag on this already.”

“Goodbye, Tom,” she said.

“Goodbye, devil, and take good care. This is probably nothing anyway.”

He was gone out the door. But the cat had slipped through it with him and was looking up at him.

“It’s all right, Boise,” he said. “I’ll be back before we shove.”

“Where do we go?” the driver asked him.

“Town.”

I can’t believe there’s any business with this heavy sea. But maybe they found something. Maybe one is in trouble somewhere. Christ, I hope we make it this time. I want to remember to make out one of those pocket wills and leave her the joint. Must remember to

get it witnessed at the Embassy and leave it in the safe. She certainly took it awfully well. But then it hasn't really hit her yet. I wish I could help her when it hits her. I wish I could be some real good to her. Maybe I can if we get by this one and the next one and the next one.

Let's get by this one first. I wonder if she'll take the stuff. I hope she will and that she'll remember to give Boise the egg. He gets hungry when the weather's cold.

The boys won't be hard to find and she can take another beating before we haul her out. One more anyway. One for sure. We'll gamble on it. There are spares for nearly everything. What's one more beating if we get to close? It would have been nice to have stayed in. Maybe it would have been. The hell it would have been.

Get it straight. Your boy you lose. Love you lose. Honor has been gone for a long time. Duty you do.

Sure and what's your duty? What I said I'd do. And all the other things you said you'd do?

In the bedroom of the farmhouse, now, the room that looked like the *Normandie,* she was lying on the bed with the cat named Boise beside her. She had not been able to eat the eggs and the champagne had no taste. She had cut up all the eggs for Boise and pulled open one desk drawer and seen the boy's handwriting on the blue envelopes and the censor stamp and then she had gone over and lain face down on the bed.

"Both of them," she said to the cat, who was happy from the eggs and from the smell of the woman who lay beside him.

"Both of them," she said. "Boise, tell me. What are we going to do about it?"

The cat purred imperceptibly.

"You don't know either," she said. "And neither does anyone else."

Part III
At Sea

I

There was a long white beach with coconut palms behind it. The reef lay across the entrance to the harbor and the heavy east wind made the sea break on it so that the entrance was easy to see once you had opened it up. There was no one on the beach and the sand was so white that it hurt his eyes to look at it.

The man on the flying bridge studied the shore. There were no shacks where the shacks should have been and there were no boats anchored in the lagoon that he could see.

"You've been in here before," he said to his mate.

"Yes."

"Weren't the shacks over there?"

"They were over there and it shows a village on the chart."

"They sure as hell aren't here now," the man said. "Can you make out any boats up in the mangroves?"

"There's nothing that I can see."

"I'm going to take her in and anchor," the man said. "I know this cut. It's about eight times as deep as it looks."

He looked down into the green water and saw the size of the shadow of his ship on the bottom.

"There's good holding ground east from where the village used to be," his mate said.

"I know. Break out the starboard anchor and stand by. I'm going to layoff there. With this wind blowing day and night there will be no insects."

"No sir."

They anchored and the boat, not big enough to be called a ship

except in the mind of the man who was her master, lay with her bow into the wind with the waves breaking white and green on the reef.

The man on the bridge watched that she swung well and held solidly. Then he looked ashore and cut his motors. He continued to look at the shore and he could not figure it out at all.

"Take three men in and have a look," he said. "I'm going to lie down a while. Remember you're scientists."

When they were scientists no weapons showed and they wore machetes and wide straw hats such as Bahaman spongers wear. These the crew referred to as *"sombreros científicos,"* The larger they were the more scientific they were considered.

"Someone has stolen my scientific hat," a heavy-shouldered Basque with thick eyebrows that came together over his nose said. "Give me a bag of frags for science's sake."

"Take my scientific hat," another Basque said. "It's twice as scientific as yours."

"What a scientific hat," the widest of the Basques said. "I feel like Einstein in this one. Thomas, can we take specimens?"

"No," the man said. "Antonio knows what I want him to do. You keep your damned scientific eyes open."

"I'll look for water."

"It's behind where the village was," the man said. "See how it is. We had probably better fill."

"H20," the Basque said. "That scientific stuff. Hey, you worthless scientist. You hat stealer. Give us four five-gallon jugs so we won't waste the trip."

The other Basque put four wicker-covered jugs in the dinghy.

The man heard them talking, "Don't hit me in the back with that damned scientific oar."

"I do it only for science."

"Fornicate science and his brother."

"Science's sister."

"Penicilina is her name."

The man watched them rowing toward the too white beach. I should have gone in, he thought. But I was up all night and I've steered twelve hours. Antonio can size it up as well as I can. But I wonder what the hell has happened.

He looked once at the reef and then at the shore and at the current of clean water running against the side and making little eddies in the lee. Then he shut his eyes and turned on his side and went to sleep.

He woke as the dinghy came alongside and he knew it was something bad when he saw their faces. His mate was sweating as he always did with trouble or bad news. He was a dry man and he did not sweat easily.

"Somebody burned the shacks," he said. "Somebody tried to put them out and there are bodies in the ashes. You can't smell them from here because of the wind."

"How many bodies?"

"We counted nine. There could be more."

"Men or women?"

"Both."

"Are there any tracks?"

"Nothing. It's rained since. Heavy rain. The sand is still pitted with it."

The wide-shouldered Basque whose name was Ara said, "They've been dead a week anyway. Birds haven't worked on them but the land crabs are working on them."

"How do you know they have been dead a week?"

"No one can say exactly," Ara said. "But they have been dead about a week. From the land crab trails the rain was about three days ago."

"How was the water?"

"It looked all right."

"Did you bring it?"

"Yes."

"I don't see why they would have poisoned the water," Ara said. "It smelled good so I tasted it and brought it."

"You shouldn't have tasted it."

"It smelled good and there was no reason to believe it was poisoned."

"Who killed the people?"

"Anybody."

"Didn't you check?"

"No. We came to tell you. You are the skipper."

"All right," said Thomas Hudson. He went below and buckled on his revolver. There was a sheath knife on the other side of the belt, the side that rode high, and the weight of the gun was on his leg. He stopped in the galley and took a spoon and put it in his pocket.

"Ara, you and Henry come ashore. Willie come in with the dinghy and then see if you can get some conches. Let Peters sleep." To his mate he said, "Check the engines, please, and all tanks."

The water was clear and lovely over the white sand bottom and he could see every ridge and wrinkle in the sand. As they waded ashore when the dinghy grounded on a ridge of sand he felt small fish playing around his toes and looked down and saw they were tiny pompano. Maybe they are not true pompano, he thought. But they look exactly like them and they are most friendly.

"Henry," he said when they were ashore. "You take the windward beach and walk it all the way up to the mangroves. Watch for tracks or anything else. Meet me here. Ara, you take the other beach and do the same."

He did not have to ask where the bodies were. He saw the tracks that led to them and heard the rattle of the land crabs in the dry brush. He looked out at his ship and the line of the breakers and Willie in the stern of the skiff with a water glass looking over the side for conches while the skiff drifted.

Since I have to do it I might as well get it over with, he thought.

But this day was built for something else. It is strange how they had such a rain here where there was no need for it and we had nothing. How long is it now that we have seen the rains go by on either side and never had a drop?

The wind was blowing heavily and had blown now, day and night, for more than fifty days. It had become a part of the man and it did not make him nervous. It fortified him and gave him strength and he hoped that it would never stop.

We wait always for something that does not come, he though t. But it is easier waiting with the wind than in a calm or with the capriciousness and malignancy of squalls. There is always water somewhere. Let it stay dry. We can always find it. There is water on all these keys if you know how to look for it.

Now, he thought to himself. Go in and get it over with. The wind helped him to get it over with. As he crouched under the scorched sea-grape bushes and sifted the sand in double handfuls the wind blew the scent of what was just ahead of him away. He found nothing in the sand and he was puzzled but he looked in all the sand to windward of the burned shacks before he moved in. He had hoped to find what he looked for the easier way. But there was nothing.

Then, with the wind at his back, so that he turned and gulped it and then held his breath again he went to work with his knife probing into the charred deliquescence that the land crabs were feeding on. He touched a sudden hardness that rolled against a bone and dug it out with the spoon. He laid it on the sand with the spoon and probed and dug and found three more in the pile. Then he turned into the wind and cleaned the knife and the spoon in the sand. He took the four bullets in a handful of sand and with the knife and the spoon in his left hand made his way back through the brush.

A big land crab, obscenely white, reared back and lifted his claws at him.

“You on the way in, boy?” the man said to him.

“I’m on the way out.”

The crab stood his ground with his claws raised high and the points open sharply.

“You’re getting pretty big for yourself,” the man said. He put his knife slowly in its sheath and the spoon in his pocket. Then he shifted the handful of sand with the four bullets in it to his left hand. He wiped his right hand on his shorts carefully. Then he drew the sweat-darkened, well-oiled .357 Magnum.

“You still have a chance,” he said to the land crab. “Nobody blames you. You’re having your pleasure and doing your duty.”

The crab did not move and his claws were held high. He was a big crab, nearly a foot across, and the man shot him between his eyes and the crab disintegrated.

“Those damn .357’s are hard to get now because draftdodging FBI’s have to use them to hunt down draftdodgers,” the man said. “But a man has to fire a shot sometime or he doesn’t know how he is shooting.”

Poor old crab, he thought. All he was practicing was his trade. But he ought to have shuffled along.

He came out onto the beach and saw where his ship was riding and the steady line of the surf and Willie anchored now and diving for conches. He cleaned his knife properly and scrubbed the spoon and washed it and then washed the four bullets. He held them in his hand and looked at them as a man who was panning for gold, expecting only flakes, would look at four nuggets in his pan. The four bullets had black noses. Now the meat was out of them, the short twist rifling showed clearly. They were 9mm standard issue for the Schmeisser machine pistol.

They made the man very happy.

They picked up all the hulls, he thought. But they left these as plain as calling cards. Now I must try to think it out. We know two things. They left nobody on the Cay and the boats are gone. Go on

from there, boy. You're supposed to be able to think.

But he did not think. Instead he lay back on the sand with his pistol pulled over so it lay between his legs and he watched the sculpture that the wind and sand had made of a piece of driftwood. It was gray and sanded and it was embedded in the white, floury sand. It looked as though it were in an exhibition. It should be in the Salon d'Automne.

He heard the breaking roar of the seas on the reef and he thought, I would like to paint this. He lay and looked at the sky which had nothing but east wind in it and the four bullets were in the buttoned-down change pocket of his shorts. He knew they were the rest of his life. But he did not wish to think about them now nor make all the practical thinking that he must make. I will enjoy the gray wood, he thought. Now we know that we have our enemies and that they cannot escape. Neither can we. But there is no necessity to think about it until Ara and Henry are back. Ara will find something. There is something to be found and he is not a fool. A beach tells many lies but somewhere the truth is always written. He felt the bullets in his change pocket and then he elbowed his way back to where the sand was drier and even whiter, if there could be a comparison in such whiteness, and he lay with his head against the gray piece of driftwood and his pistol between his legs.

"How long have you been my girl?" he said to the pistol.

"Don't answer," he said to the pistol. "Lie there good and I will see you kill something better than land crabs when the time comes."

II

He was lying there looking out at the line of the surf and he had it pretty well thought out by the time he saw Ara and Henry coming down the beach. He saw them and then looked away from them and out to sea again. He had tried not to think about it and to relax but it had been impossible. Now he would relax until they came and he would think of nothing but the sea on the reef. But there was not time. They came too fast.

"What did you find?" he asked Ara who sat down by the gray driftwood. Henry sat beside him.

"I found one. A young man. Dead."

"He was a German all right," Henry said. "He only had on shorts and he had very long hair, blond and sun-streaked, and he was face down in the sand."

"Where was he shot?"

"At the base of the spine and in the back of the neck," Ara said. *"Rematado*. Here are the bullets. I washed them."

"Yes," said Thomas Hudson. "I have four like them."

"They're 9mm Luger aren't they?" Henry asked. "It's the same caliber as our .38's."

"These with the black ends are for the machine pistol," Thomas Hudson said. "Thanks for digging them out, doctor."

"At your orders," Ara said. "The neck one had gone clean through and I found it in the sand. Henry cut out the other one."

"I didn't mind it," Henry said. "The wind and the sun had sort of dried him. It was like cutting into a pie. He wasn't like those in there. Why did they kill him, Tom?"

“I don’t know.”

“What do you think?” Ara asked. “Did they come in here to make repairs?”

“No. They’ve lost their boat.”

“Yes,” Ara said. “They took the boats.”

“Why was the sailor killed?” Henry asked. “You forgive me if I don’t sound too intelligent, Tom. But you know how much I want to do what I can and I’m so happy we have contact.”

“We haven’t contact,” Thomas Hudson said. “But Christ we’ve got a lovely scent.”

“Breast high?” Henry asked hopefully.

“Don’t mention that word to me.”

“But Tom, who killed the sailor and why?”

“Family trouble,” Thomas Hudson said. “Did you ever see a man shot in the base of the spine for kindness? Afterwards whoever did it was kind and shot him in the neck.”

“Maybe there were two,” said Ara. “Did you find the hulls?”

“No,” Ara said. “I looked where they would be. Even if it was a machine pistol it would not have thrown them further than I looked.”

“It could be the same methodical bastard that picked up the other ones.”

“Where would they go?” Ara asked. “Where would they make for with the boats?”

“They have to go south,” Thomas said. “You know damned well they can’t go north.”

“And we?”

“I’m trying to think in their heads,” Thomas Hudson said. “I haven’t many facts to go on.”

“You have the deads and the boats gone,” Henry said. “You can think it out, Tom.”

“And one known weapon and where did they lose their undersea boat and how many are they? Stir that and add we couldn’t raise

Guantánamo last night and add how many keys there are south of here plus when we have to fill our tanks. Add Peters and serve."

"It will be all right, Tom."

"Sure," Thomas Hudson said. "All right and all wrong are identical twins in this business."

"You're confident we will get them though, aren't you?"

"Of course," Thomas Hudson said. "Now go and flag Willie in and let Antonio get started on his conches. We will have chowder. Ara, you load all the water you can in the next three hours. Tell Antonio to go ahead on the motors. I want to get out of here before dark. Was there nothing on the island? No pigs nor any fowl?"

"Nothing," Ara told him. "They took everything."

"Well, they will have to eat them. They have no feed for them and no ice. They are Germans so they are capable and they can get turtle in these months. I think we will find them at Lobos. It is logical they should take Lobos. Have Willie fill the ice-well with conches and we will take only enough water to the next key."

He stopped and reconsidered, "No, I'm sorry. I was wrong. Fill water until sundown and I will take her out at moonrise. We lose three hours but we save six later on."

"Did you taste the water?" Ara asked.

"Yes," he said. "It was clean and good. You were quite right."

"Thank you," Ara said. "I will go now to call in Willie. He has been diving many."

"Tom," Henry asked. "Do you want me to stay with you or to carry water or what?"

"Carry water until you are too tired and then get some sleep. I want you on the bridge with me tonight."

"Can I bring you a shirt or a sweater?" Henry asked.

"Bring me a shirt and one of the very light blankets," Thomas Hudson said. "I can sleep now in the sun and the sand is dry. But later on it will be cool with the wind."

"Isn't the sand wonderful? I've never known such dry or

powdery sand."

"The wind has beaten it for many years."

"Will we get them, Tommy?"

"Of course," Thomas Hudson said. "There is no doubt of it at all."

"Please forgive me if I am ever stupid," Henry said.

"You were forgiven when you were born," Thomas Hudson said. "You are a very brave boy, Henry, and I am fond of you and trust you. You're not stupid either."

"You truly think we will have a fight?"

"I know it. Do not think about that. Think about details. Think about all the things you should do and how we should be a happy ship until we fight. I'll think about the fight."

"I will go and do my duty as well as I can," Henry said. "I wish we could practice the fight so I could do my part better."

Thomas Hudson said, "You'll do it all right. I do not see any way that we can miss it."

"It's been so very long," Henry said.

"But everything is long," Thomas Hudson told him. "And pursuit is the longest."

"Get some sleep," Henry said. "You never sleep anymore."

"I'll sleep," Thomas Hudson said.

"Where do you suppose they lost their own boat, Tom?" Ara asked.

"They got these boats here and they did away with these people a week ago, say. So they must be the one that Camagüey claimed. But they got somewhere close to here before they lost her. They didn't sail any rubber boats into that wind."

"Then they must have lost her east of here."

"Naturally. And they were damned well in the clear when they lost her," Thomas Hudson said.

"It was still a long way home," Henry said.

"It is going to be a longer way home now," Ara said.

“They’re funny people,” Thomas Hudson said. “They’re all brave and some of them are so damned admirable. Then they have mean ones like this.”

“We better go and do our work,” Ara said. “We can talk tonight on watch to keep awake. You get some rest, Tom.”

“Get some sleep,” Henry said. “Rest is as good as sleep.”

“No it isn’t,” Ara said. “You need sleep, Tom.”

“I’ll try to get some,” Thomas Hudson said. But when they were gone he could not sleep.

What did they have to do this rotten thing here for? he thought. We will get them anyway. All these people would have done was tell us how many they were and how they were armed. I suppose that was worth killing for, from their standpoint. Especially if they thought of these people as Negroes. But all that shows something about them. To have killed like that they must have some plan and they must have some hope of being picked up. Also there must have been dissension about the plan or they would not have done this murdering here of the sailor. That could be an execution for anything, though. He might have let her go down when she could have been kept up to make the try to get home.

Where does that bring us? he thought. You can’t bank on that. It is only a possibility. But if it was true it would mean she went down in sight of land and fast. That would mean they would not have much stuff. Maybe the boy did not do it and was falsely accused.

You don’t know how many boats they have because there could be a boat or two boats from here out turtling. There is nothing to do but think around it and check your keys.

But suppose they have crossed the Old Bahama channel and hit the Cuban coast? Sure, he thought. Why didn’t you think of that before? That’s the best thing for them to do.

If they do that they can make for home on a Spanish boat out of Havana. There is a screening at Kingston. But that is an easier chance to take and you know plenty of people have beaten it. That

damned Peters with his radio out. FCC, he thought. Frankly Can't Communicate. Then we got the beauty big one and it was too much radio for him. I don't know how he has fucked it. But he couldn't get Guantánamo last night on our call hour and if he doesn't get her tonight we are on our own. The hell with it, he thought. There are worse places to be than on your own. Get some sleep now, he said to himself. There is nothing you can do now that is sounder than that.

He moved his shoulders against the sand and went to sleep with the roaring of the surf on the reef.

III

While Thomas Hudson was asleep he dreamed that his son Tom was not dead and that the other boys were all right and that the war was over. He dreamed that Tom's mother was sleeping with him and she was sleeping on top of him as she liked to do sometimes. He felt all of this and the tangibility of her legs against his legs and her body against his and her breasts against his chest and her mouth was playing against his mouth. Her hair hung down and lay heavy and silky on his eyes and on his cheeks and he turned his lips away from her searching ones and took the hair in his mouth and held it. Then with one hand he moistened the .357 Magnum and slipped it easily and sound asleep where it should be. Then he lay under her weight with her silken hair over his face like a curtain and moved slowly and rhythmically.

That was when Henry put the light blanket over him and Thomas Hudson said, asleep, "Thank you for being so moist and lovely and for pressing on me so hard. Thank you for coming back so quickly and for not being too thin."

"The poor son of a bitch," Henry said and covered him carefully. He went away carrying two wicker five-gallon demijohns on his shoulders.

"I thought you wanted me thin, Tom," the woman said in the dream. "You said I felt like a young goat when I was thin and that nothing felt better than a young goat."

"You," he said. "Who's going to make love to who?"

"Both of us," she said. "Unless you want it differently."

"You make love to me. I'm tired."

“You’re just lazy. Let me take the pistol off and put it by your leg. The pistol’s in the way of everything.”

“Lay it by the bed,” he said. “And make everything the way it should be.”

Then it was all the way it should be and she said, “Should I be you or you be me?”

“You have first choice.”

“I’ll be you.”

“I can’t be you. But I can try.”

“It’s fun. You try it. Don’t try to save yourself at all. Try to lose everything and take everything too.”

“All right.”

“Are you doing it?”

“Yes,” he said. “It’s wonderful.”

“Do you know now what we have?”

“Yes,” he said. “Yes I know. It’s easy to give up.”

“Will you give up everything? Are you glad I brought back the boys and that I come and be a devil in the night?”

“Yes. I’m glad of everything and will you swing your hair across my face and give me your mouth please and hold me so tight it kills me?”

“Of course. And you’ll do it for me?”

When he woke he touched the blanket and he did not know, for an instant, that it was a dream. Then he lay on his side and felt the pistol holster between his legs and how it was really and all the hollownesses in him were twice as hollow and there was a new one from the dream. He saw it was still light and he saw the dinghy carrying water to his ship and he saw the white pounding of the surf on the reef. He turned on his side and tucked the blanket around himself and slept on his arms. He was asleep when they came to wake him and he had not dreamed at all this time.

IV

He steered all that night and he had Ara on the flying bridge with him until midnight and then Henry. They were running with a heavy beam sea and steering was like riding a horse downhill, he thought. It is all downhill and sometimes it is across the side of a hill. The sea is many hills and in here it is a broken country like the badlands.

"Talk to me," he said to Ara.

"What about, Tom?"

"Anything."

"Peters couldn't raise Guantánamo again. He has ruined it. The new big one."

"I know," Thomas Hudson said and tried to roll her as little as he could, riding the side of the hill. "He's burnt out something that he can't repair."

"He's listening," Ara said. "Willie is keeping him awake."

"Who's keeping Willie awake?"

"He's awake good," Ara said. "He doesn't sleep any better than you."

"How about you?"

"I'm good for all night if you want. Don't you want me to steer?"

"No. I haven't anything else to do."

"Tom, how badly do you feel?"

"I don't know. How badly can you feel?"

"It's useless," Ara said. "Would you like the wineskin?"

"No. Bring me up a bottle of cold tea and check on Peters and Willie. Check on everything."

Ara went down and Thomas Hudson was alone with the night and the sea and he still rode it like a horse going downhill too fast across broken country.

Henry came up with the bottle of cold tea. “How are we, Tom?” he asked.

“We’re perfect.”

“Peters has the Miami police department on the old radio. All the prowl cars. Willie wants to talk to them. But I told him he couldn’t.”

“Correct.”

“On the UHF, Peters has something squirting in German but he says it is way up with the wolf packs.”

“He couldn’t hear it then.”

“It’s a very funny night, Tom.”

“It’s not that funny.”

“I don’t know. I’m just telling you. Give me the course and let me take her and you go down.”

“Has Peters logged it?”

“Of course.”

“Tell Juan to give me a fix and have Peters log it. When was the son of a bitch squirting?”

“When I came up.”

“Tell Juan to get the fix and log it right away.”

“Yes, Tom.”

“How are all the comic characters?”

“Sleeping. Gil, too.”

“Get the rag out and have Peters log the fix.”

“Do you want it?”

“I know too damn well where we are.”

“Yes, Tom,” Henry said. “Take it easy if you can.”

Henry came up but Thomas Hudson did not feel like talking and Henry stood by him on the flying bridge and braced himself against the roll. After an hour he said, “There’s a light, Tom. Off our

starboard bow about twenty degrees."

"That's right."

When he was abeam of it he changed the course and the sea was astern.

"Now she is headed home to pasture," he said to Henry. "We're in the channel now. Wake Juan and get him up here and really keep your eyes open. You were late on the light."

"I'm sorry, Tom. I'll get Juan. Wouldn't you like a four-man watch?"

"Not until just before daylight," Thomas Hudson said. "I'll give you the word."

They might have cut across the banks, Thomas Hudson was thinking. But I don't think they would. They wouldn't want to cross at night and in daytime the banks wouldn't look good to deep-water sailors. They'd make their turn where I did. Then they would edge across comfortably the way we are going to do and they would probably hit for the highest part of the Cuban coast that showed. They don't want to get into any port so they will run with the wind. They will keep outside of Confites because they know there is a radio station there. But they have to get food and they have to get water. Actually they would do best to try to get as close to Havana as they could to land somewhere around Bacuranao and then infiltrate in from there. I'll send a signal from Confites. I won't ask him what to do. That will hold us up if he's away. I'll tell him what it is and what I'm doing. He can make his own dispositions. Guantánamo can make theirs and Camagüey can make theirs and La Fe theirs and the FBI theirs and maybe something will happen in a week.

Hell, he thought. I'll get them this week. They've got to stop for water and to cook what they have before the animals starve and rot. There's a good chance they will only run at nights and lay up daytimes. That would be logical. That's what I would do if I were them. Try to think like an intelligent German sailor with the

problems this undersea boat commander has.

He has problems all right, Thomas Hudson thought. And the worst problem he has is us and he doesn't even know about us. We don't look dangerous to him. We look good to him.

Don't take it in any bloodthirsty way, he thought. Nothing of this is going to bring back anything. Use your head and be glad to have something to do and good people to do it with.

"Juan," he said. "What do you see, boy?"

"All bloody ocean."

"You other gentlemen see anything?"

"Bloody nothing," Gil said.

"My bloody belly sees coffee. But it doesn't come any closer," Ara said.

"I see land," Henry said. He had seen it that instant, a low square smudge as though a man's thumb had daubed weak ink against the lightening sky.

"That's behind Romano," Thomas Hudson said. "Thank you, Henry. Now you characters go down for coffee and send up four other desperate men to see strange and amusing things."

"Do you want coffee, Tom?" Ara asked.

"No. I'll take tea when it's made."

"We've only been on watch a couple of hours," Gil said. "We don't need to go off, Tom."

"Go on down and get coffee and give the other desperate men a chance for glory."

"Tom, didn't you say you thought they were at Lobos?"

"Yes. But I changed my mind."

The others had gone down and four were coming up. "Gentlemen," Thomas Hudson said. "Split the four quadrants up amongst you. Is there coffee below?"

"Plenty," his mate said. "And tea. The engines are good and she didn't make any more water than you would expect in the cross sea."

“How is Peters?”

“He drank his own whisky in the night. The one with the little lamb on it. But he stayed awake. Willie kept him awake and drank his whisky,” his mate said.

“We have to fill gas at Confites and take on anything else there is.”

“They can load fast and I can kill a pig and scald and scrape him,” his mate said. “I’ll give them a quarter at the radio station to help me and I can butcher him while you are running. You get some sleep while we load. Would you like me to steer?”

“No. I only have to send three signals at Confites and you load and I will sleep. Then we will pursue.”

“Toward home?”

“Of course. They may avoid us for a time. But they cannot escape us. Later we will talk about it. How are they?”

“You know them. We will talk about it later. Steer in a little more, Tom. With the countercurrent you’ll shorten it.”

“Did you lose much with rolling?”

“Nothing that matters. It was a bitch of a beam sea,” his mate said.

“Yo lo creo,” said Thomas Hudson. “I believe it.”

“There should only be the people of this one undersea boat around here. She must surely be the one they claimed sunk. Now they are off La Guayra and above Kingston and on all the petrol lanes. Also they are with the wolf packs.”

“Also they are here sometimes.”

“Yes, for our sins.”

“And for theirs.”

“On this thing we will pursue well and intelligently.”

“Let us get it started,” Thomas Hudson said.

“There has been no delay.”

“It goes slowly for me.”

“Yes,” his mate said. “But get some sleep in Confites and I

promise everything will go faster than you could hope.”

V

Thomas Hudson saw the high lookout post on the sandy key and the tall signalling mast. They were painted white and were the first things that showed. Then he saw the stumpy radio masts and the high cocked wreck of the ship that lay on the rocks and obscured the view of the radio shack. The key was not handsome from his side.

The sun was behind him and it was easy to find the first big pass through the reef and then, skirting the shoals and the coral heads, to come up on the leeward shelter. There was a sandy half-moon of beach and the island was covered with dry grass on this side and was rocky and flat on its windward end. The water was clear and green over the sand and Thomas Hudson came in close to the center of the beach and anchored with his bow almost against the shore. The sun was up and the Cuban flag was flying over the radio shack and the outbuildings. The signalling mast was bare in the wind. There was no one in sight and the Cuban flag, new and brightly clean, was snapping in the wind.

"Maybe they had a relief," Thomas Hudson said. "The old flag was pretty worn when we left."

He looked and saw his drums of gas where he had left them and the marks of digging in the sand where his blocks of ice should be buried. The sand was high like new-made graves and over the island sooty terns were flying in the wind. They nested in the rocks up at the windward end and a few nested in the grass of the lee. They were flying now, falling off with the wind, cutting sharply into it, and dipping down toward the grass and the rocks. They were all

calling, sadly and desperately.

Must be somebody out getting eggs for breakfast, Thomas Hudson thought. Just then he smelled ham frying in the galley and he went astern and called down that he would take his breakfast on the bridge. He studied the island carefully. They might be here, he thought. They could have taken this.

But when a man in shorts came down the path that ran from the radio shack to the beach, it was the Lieutenant. He was very brown and cheerful and he had not cut his hair in three months and he called out, "How was your trip?"

"Good," said Thomas Hudson. "Will you come aboard for a beer?"

"Later," the Lieutenant said. "They brought your ice and supplies and some beer two days ago. We buried the ice. The other things are at the house."

"What news do you have?"

"The aviation were supposed to have sunk a submarine off Guinchos ten days ago. But that was before you left."

"Yes," Thomas Hudson said. "That was two weeks ago. Is that the same one?"

"Yes."

"Any other news?"

"Another submarine was supposed to have shot down a blimp off Cayo Sal day before yesterday."

"Is that confirmed?"

"We heard so. Then there was your pig."

"Yes?"

"The same day of the blimp they brought a pig for you with your supplies and he swam out to sea the next morning and was drowned. We had fed him, too."

"¡Qué puerco más suicido!" Thomas Hudson said.

The Lieutenant laughed. He had a very cheerful brown face and he was not stupid. He was acting because it amused him. He had

orders to do anything he could for Hudson and to ask him nothing. Thomas Hudson had orders to use any facilities the station could give and tell nothing to anyone.

"Any more news?" he asked. "Have you seen any Bahaman sponging or turtle boats?"

"What would they be doing here when they have all the turtle and sponge over there? But there were two Bahaman turtle boats came by here this week. They turned off the point and tacked to come in. But they ran for Cayo Cruz instead."

"I wonder what they were doing here?"

"I don't know. You cruise those waters for scientific purposes. Why should turtle boats leave the best turtling grounds to come here?"

"How many men could you see?"

"We could only see the men at the tiller. The boats had palm branches spread over the deck. They were built up like a shack. It could be to give shade for the turtles."

"Were the helmsmen white or black?"

"White and sunburned."

"Could you make out any numbers or names on the boats?"

"No. They were too far away. I put the key in a state of defense that night and the next day and night and there was nothing."

"When did they go by?"

"The day before your ice and groceries and your suicidal pig arrived. Eleven days after the sub was reported sunk by your aviation. Three days before you arrived here. Are they friends of yours?"

"You signalled them, of course?"

"Naturally. And I have heard nothing."

"Can you send three messages for me?"

"Of course. Send them in as soon as they are ready."

"I will start to load gas and ice and put the supplies aboard. Was there anything in them you can use?"

“I don’t know. There is a list. I signed for it but I could not read it in English.”

“Didn’t they send any chickens or turkeys?”

“Yes,” the Lieutenant said. “I was saving them for a surprise.”

“We’ll split them,” Thomas Hudson said. “We’ll split the beer, too.”

“Let my people help you load the gas and ice.”

“Good. Thank you very much. I would like to be gone in two hours.”

“I understand. Our relief has been put off another month.”

“Again?”

“Again.”

“How do your people take it?”

“They’re all here on a disciplinary basis.”

“Thank you very much for your help. The whole world of science is grateful.”

“Guantánamo, too?”

“Guantánamo, the Athens of science.”

“I think they may have holed up somewhere.”

“So do I,” said Thomas Hudson.

“The shelters were of coconut palm and they were still green.”

“Tell me anything else.”

“I don’t know anything else. Send in the messages. I don’t want to come on board to take up any of your time or be a nuisance.”

“If anything perishable comes out while I am gone, use it before it spoils.”

“Thank you. I’m sorry your pig committed such suicide.”

“Thank you,” said Thomas Hudson. “We all have our small problems.”

“I’ll tell the men not to come on board but only to help load at the stern and help alongside.”

“Thank you,” Thomas Hudson said. “Can you remember anything more about the turtle boats?”

“They were typical. One was almost exactly the same as the other. They looked as though they had been built by the same builder. They turned the point of the reef and made to tack in here. Then they ran before the wind for Cayo Cruz.”

“Inside the reef?”

“Inside until they were out of sight.”

“And the sub off Cayo Sal?”

“Stayed on the surface and shot it out with the blimp.”

“I’d stay in a state of defense if I were you.”

“I am,” the Lieutenant said. “That’s why you haven’t seen anybody.”

“I saw the birds moving.”

“The poor birds,” the Lieutenant said.

VI

They were running to the westward inside the reef with the wind astern. The tanks had been filled, the ice stowed, and below one watch was picking and cleaning chickens. The other was cleaning weapons. The canvas that shielded the flying bridge to waist height was laced on and the two long boards that announced in twelve-inch block letters the scientific mission of the boat were in place. Looking over the side watching the depth of water Thomas Hudson saw the patches of chicken feathers floating out onto the following sea.

"Take her in just as close as we can get without hitting any of those sandbars," he told Ara. "You know this coast."

"I know it's no good," Ara said. "Where are we going to anchor?"

"I want to check up at the head of Cayo Cruz."

"We can check there but I don't think it will be much use. You don't think they would stay there, do you?"

"No. But there might be fishermen in there who would have seen them. Or charcoal burners."

"I wish this wind would fail," Ara said. "I'd like to have a couple of days of flat calm."

"It's squally over Romano."

"I know. But this wind blows through here like through a pass in the mountains. We'll never catch them if this wind keeps up."

"We've been right so far," Thomas Hudson said. "And maybe we'll get some luck. They could have taken Lobos and used the radio there to call up that other sub to take them off."

“That shows they didn’t know the other sub was there.”

“Must be. They move a lot in ten days.”

“When they want to,” Ara said. “Let’s stop thinking, Tom. It gives me a headache. I’d rather handle gas drums. You think and tell me where you want me to steer.”

“Just as she goes and watch for that no-good Minerva. Keep well inside of that and outside the sandspits.”

“Good.”

Do you suppose she lost her radio when she got smacked? Thomas Hudson thought. She must have had an emergency radio that she could have used. But Peters never picked her up on the UHF after she was smacked. Still, that doesn’t necessarily prove anything. Nothing proves anything except that those two boats were seen on the course we are on three days ago. Did I ask him if they had their dinghys on deck? No, I forgot to. But they must have because he said they were ordinary Bahaman turtling boats except for the shelters they had rigged with the palm branches.

How many people? You don’t know. Any wounded? You don’t know. How armed? All you know is a machine pistol. Their course? We are on it until now.

Maybe we will find something between Cayo Cruz and Mégano, he thought. What you’ll probably find is lots of willets and iguana tracks in the sand toward the water hole.

Well, it keeps your mind off things. What things? There aren’t any things any more. Oh yes, there are. There is this ship and the people on her and the sea and the bastards you are hunting. Afterwards you will see your animals and go into town and get drunk as you can and your ashes dragged and then get ready to go out and do it again.

Maybe this time you will get these characters. You did not destroy their undersea boat but you were faintly instrumental in its destruction. If you can round up the crew, it will be extremely useful.

Then why don't you care anything about anything? he asked himself. Why don't you think of them as murderers and have the righteous feelings that you should have? Why do you just pound and pound on after it like a riderless horse that is still in the race? Because we are all murderers, he told himself. We all are on both sides, if we are any good, and no good will come of any of it.

But you have to do it. Sure, he said. But I don't have to be proud of it. I only have to do it well. I didn't hire out to like it. You did not even hire out, he told himself. That makes it even worse.

"Let me take her, Ara," he said. Ara gave him the wheel.

"Keep a good lookout to starboard. But don't let the sun blind you."

"I'll get my glasses. Look, Tom. Why don't you let me steer and get a good four-man lookout up here? You're tired and you didn't rest at all at the key."

"We don't need a four-man lookout in here. Later on we will."

"But you're tired."

"I'm not sleepy. Look, if they run nights along here close in to shore they are going to get in trouble. Then they will have to lay up to make repairs and we will find them."

"That's no reason for you never to rest, Tom."

"I'm not doing it to show off," Thomas Hudson said.

"No one has ever thought so."

"How do you feel about these bastards?"

"Only that we will catch them and kill what is necessary and bring the others in."

"What about the massacre?"

"I don't say we would have done the same thing. But they thought it was necessary. They did not do it for pleasure," Ara said.

"And their dead man?"

"Henry has wanted to kill Peters several times. I have wanted to kill him myself sometimes."

"Yes," Thomas Hudson agreed. "It is not an uncommon feeling."

“I don’t think of any of these things and so I don’t worry. Why don’t you not worry, and read when you relax the way you always did?”

“I’m going to sleep tonight. After we anchor I’ll read and then sleep. We’ve gained four days on them, though it does not show. Now we must search carefully.”

“We will get them or we will drive them into other people’s hands,” Ara said. “What difference does it make? We have our pride but we have another pride people know nothing of.”

“That is what I had forgotten,” Thomas Hudson said.

“It is a pride without vanity,” Ara continued. “Failure is its brother and shit is its sister and death is its wife.”

“It must be a big pride.”

“It is,” Ara said. “You must not forget it, Tom, and you must not destroy yourself. Everyone in the ship has that pride, including Peters. Although I do not like Peters.”

“Thanks for telling me,” Thomas Hudson said. “I feel fuck-all discouraged about things sometimes.”

“Tom,” Ara said. “All a man has is pride. Sometimes you have it so much it is a sin. We have all done things for pride that we knew were impossible. We didn’t care. But a man must implement his pride with intelligence and care. Now that you have ceased to be careful of yourself I must ask you to be, please. For us and for the ship.”

“Who is us?”

“All of us.”

“OK,” Thomas Hudson said. “Ask for your dark glasses.”

“Tom, please understand.”

“I understand. Thanks very much. I’ll eat a hearty supper and sleep like a child.”

Ara did not think it was funny and he always thought funny things were funny.

“You try it, Tom,” he said.

VII

They anchored in the lee of Cayo Cruz in the sandy bight between the two keys.

"We'll put out another anchor to lay here," Thomas Hudson called to his mate. "I don't like this bottom."

The mate shrugged his shoulders and bent down to the second anchor and Thomas Hudson eased her ahead against the tide, watching the grass from the banks riding by in the current. He came astern until his second anchor was well dug in. The boat lay with her bow into the wind and the tide running past her. There was much wind even in this lee and he knew that when the tide changed she would swing broadside to the swell.

"The hell with it," he said. "Let her roll."

But his mate had lowered the dinghy already and they were running out a stern anchor. Thomas Hudson watched them drop the little Danforth where it would hold her into the wind when the tide came aflood.

"Why don't you put out a couple more?" he called. "Then maybe we could sell her for a goddamn spider."

The mate grinned at him.

"Get the outboard on her. I'm going in."

"No, Tom," his mate said. "Let Ara and Willie go in. I'll take them in and another party to Mégano. Do you want them to take the *niños?"*

"No. Be scientists."

I'm accepting a lot of handling, he thought. That must mean I really do need some rest. The thing is I am neither tired nor sleepy.

“Antonio,” he said.

“Yes,” said his mate.

“I’ll take the air mattress and two cushions and a big drink.”

“What kind of drink?”

“Gin and coconut water with Angostura and lime.”

“A *Tomini?”* his mate said, pleased that he was drinking again.

“Double quantity.”

Henry threw the air mattress up and climbed after it with a book and a magazine.

“You’re out of the wind here,” he said. “Do you want me to open any of this canvas for ventilation?”

“Since when did I rate all this?”

“Tom, we talked of it and we all agreed that you need some rest. You’ve been driving yourself past what a man can stand. You are past it now.”

“Shit,” said Thomas Hudson.

“Maybe,” said Henry. “I said I thought you were OK and could go quite a lot more and hold the pace. But the others were worried and they convinced me. You can deconvince me. But take it easy now, Tom.”

“I never felt better. I just don’t give a damn.”

“That’s what it’s about. You won’t come down off the bridge. You want to stand all the watches steering. And you don’t give a damn about anything.”

“OK,” said Thomas Hudson. “I get the picture. But I still command.”

“I didn’t mean it in any bad way, truly.”

“Forget it,” Thomas Hudson said. “I’m resting. You know how to search a key, don’t you?”

“I should.”

“See what there is on Mégano.”

“That’s mine. Willie and Ara have gone in already. I’m just waiting with the other party for Antonio to come back with the

dinghy."

"How is Peters?"

"He's been working hard on the big radio all afternoon. He thinks he has it fixed OK."

"That would be wonderful. If I'm asleep, wake me as soon as you get back."

"Yes, Tom." Henry reached down and took something that was handed to him. It was a big glass full of ice and a rusty-colored liquid and it was wrapped in a double thickness of paper towel held fast by a rubber band.

"A double *Tomini,"* Henry said. "Drink it and read and go to sleep. You can put the glass in one of the big frag slots."

Thomas Hudson took a long sip. "I like it," he said.

"You used to. Everything will be fine, Tom."

"Everything we can do damn well better be."

"Just get a good rest."

"I will."

Henry went down and Thomas Hudson heard the hum of the outboard coming in. It stopped and there was talking and then he heard the hum of it going away. He waited a little, listening. Then he took the drink and threw it high over the side and let the wind take it astern. He settled the glass in the hole it fitted best in the triple rack and lay face down on the rubber mattress with his two arms around it.

I think they had wounded under the shelters, he thought. Of course it could be to conceal many people. But I do not believe that. They would have come in here the first night. I should have gone ashore. I will from now on. But Ara and Henry could not be better and Willie is very good. I must try to be very good. Try hard tonight, he told himself. And chase hard and good and with no mistakes and do not overrun them.

VIII

He felt a hand on his shoulder. It was Ara and he said, “We got one, Tom. Willie and I.”

Thomas Hudson swung down and Ara was with him. The German lay on the stern wrapped in a blanket. His head was on two cushions. Peters was sitting on the deck beside him with a glass of water.

“Look what we got,” he said.

The German was thin and there was a blond beard on his chin and on his sunken cheeks. His hair was long and uncombed and in the late afternoon light, with the sun almost down, he looked like a saint.

“He can’t talk,” Ara said. “Willie and I tried him. You better keep to windward of him, too.”

“I smelled it coming down,” Thomas Hudson said. “Ask him if he wants anything,” he said to Peters.

The radio operator spoke to him in German and the German looked toward him but he did not speak nor move his head. Thomas Hudson heard the humming of the outboard motor, and looked across the bight at the dinghy coming out of the sunset. It was loaded down to the water line. He looked down at the German again.

“Ask him how many they are. Tell him we must know how many they are. Tell him this is important.”

Peters spoke to the German softly and it seemed to Thomas Hudson almost lovingly.

The German said three words with great effort.

“He says nothing is important,” Peters said.

“Tell him he is wrong. I have to know. Ask him if he wants morphine.”

The German looked at Thomas Hudson kindly and said three words.

“He says it doesn’t hurt anymore,” Peters said. He spoke rapidly in German and again Thomas Hudson caught the loving tone; or, perhaps it was only the loving sound of the language.

“Shut up, Peters,” Thomas Hudson said. “Translate only and exactly what I say. Did you hear me?”

“Yes, sir,” Peters said.

“Tell him I can make him tell.”

Peters spoke to the German and he turned his eyes toward Thomas Hudson. They were old eyes now but they were in a young man’s face gone old as driftwood and nearly as gray.

“Nein” the German said slowly.

“He says no,” Peters translated.

“Yeah, I got that part of it,” Thomas Hudson said. “Get him some warm soup, Willie, and bring some cognac. Peters, ask him if he wouldn’t like some morphine really if he doesn’t have to talk. Tell him we have plenty.”

Peters translated and the German looked toward Thomas Hudson and smiled a thin, northern smile.

He spoke almost inaudibly to Peters.

“He says thank you but he doesn’t need it and it’s better to save it.”

Then he said something softly to Peters who translated, “He says he could have used it last week.”

“Tell him I admire him,” Thomas Hudson said.

Antonio, his mate, was alongside in the dinghy with Henry and the rest of the Mégano party.

“Come aboard easy,” Thomas Hudson said to them. “Keep away from the stern. We got a Kraut dying on the stern that I want to

have die easy. What did you find?"

"Nothing," Henry said. "Absolutely nothing."

"Peters," Thomas Hudson said. "Talk to him all you want. You might get something. I'm going forward with Ara and Willie to get a drink."

Below, he said, "How's your soup, Willie?"

"The first one I put my hands on was clam broth," Willie said. "It's about hot enough."

"Why didn't you give him oxtail or mulligatawny?" Thomas Hudson said. "They're more deadly in his condition. Where the hell is the chicken?"

"I didn't want to give him the chicken. That's Henry's."

"Quite right, too," Henry said. "Why should we coddle him?"

"I don't think we really are. When I ordered it I thought some soup and a drink might help him talk. But he isn't going to talk. Give me a gin, will you, Ara?"

"They made a shelter for him, Tom, and he had a good bed made from branches and plenty of water and food in a crock. They tried to make him comfortable and they ditched the sand for drainage. There were many good tracks from the beach and I would say they were eight or ten. Not more. Willie and I were very careful carrying him. Both his wounds are gangrenous and the gangrene is very high toward the right thigh. Perhaps we should not have brought him but instead have come for you and Peters to question him in his shelter. If so, it is my fault."

"Did he have a weapon?"

"No. Nor any identification."

"Give me my drink," Thomas Hudson said. "When would you say the branches for the shelter were cut?"

"Not later than yesterday morning, I would say. But I could not be sure."

"Did he speak at all?"

"No. He looked as though made of wood when he saw us with

the pistols. He looked afraid of Willie once. When he saw his eye, I think. Then he smiled when we lifted him."

"To show he could," Willie said.

"Then he went away," Ara said. "How long do you think it will take him to die, Tom?"

"I don't know."

"Well, let's go out and take the drinks," Henry said. "I don't trust Peters."

"Let's drink the clam broth up," Willie said. "I'm hungry. I can heat him a can of Henry's chicken if he says it is OK."

"If it will help to make him talk," Henry said. "Of course."

"It probably won't," Willie said. "But it's kind of shitty to give him clam broth the way he is. Take him out the cognac, Henry. Maybe he really likes that, like you and me."

"Don't bother him," Thomas Hudson said. "He's a good Kraut."

"Sure," Willie said. "They're all good Krauts when they fold up."

"He hasn't folded up," Thomas Hudson said. "He's just dying."

"With much style," Ara said.

"You getting to be a Kraut-lover, too?" Willie asked him.

"That makes you and Peters."

"Shut up, Willie," Thomas Hudson said.

"What's the matter with you?" Willie said to Thomas Hudson. "You're just the exhausted leader of a little group of earnest Kraut-lovers."

"Come up forward, Willie," Thomas Hudson said. "Ara, take the soup astern when it is warm. The rest of you go watch the Kraut die, if you want. But don't crowd him."

Antonio started to follow as Thomas Hudson and Willie went forward but Thomas Hudson shook his head at him and the big man went back to the galley.

They were in the forward cockpit and it was almost dark. Thomas Hudson could just see Willie's face. It looked better in this light and he was on the side of the good eye. Thomas Hudson

looked at Willie and then at his two anchor lines and at a tree he could still see on the beach. It's a tricky sandy bottom, he thought; and he said, "All right, Willie. Say the rest of it."

"You," Willie said. "Flogging yourself to death up there because your kid is dead. Don't you know everybody's kids die?"

"I know it. What else?"

"That fucking Peters and a fucking Kraut stinking up the fantail and what kind of a ship is it where the cook is the mate?"

"How does he cook?"

"He cooks wonderful and he knows more about small-boat handling than all of us put together, including you."

"Much more."

"Shit, Tom. I'm not blowing my top. I got no goddamn top to blow. I'm used to doing things a different way. I like it on the ship and I like everybody except that half-cunt Peters. Only you quit flogging yourself."

"I'm not really," Thomas Hudson said. "I don't think about anything except work."

"You're so noble you ought to be stuffed and crucified," Willie said. "Think about cunt."

"We're headed toward it."

"That's the way to talk."

"Willie, are you OK now?"

"Sure. Why the hell wouldn't I be? That Kraut got me, I guess. They had him fixed up nice like we wouldn't fix up anybody. Or maybe we would if we had time. But they took time. They don't know how close we are. But they got to know somebody's chasing. Everybody's after them now. But they fixed him up just as nice as anybody could be fixed in the condition he was."

"Sure," Thomas Hudson said. "They fixed up those people back on the key nice, too."

"Yeah," said Willie. "Isn't that the hell of it?"

Just then Peters came in. He always held himself as a Marine

even when he was not at his best and he was proudest of the real discipline without the formalities of discipline which was the rule of the ship. He was the one who took the greatest advantage of it. Now he stopped, came to attention, saluted, which showed he was drunk, and said, “Tom, I mean, sir. He is dead.”

“Who’s dead?”

“The prisoner, sir.”

“OK,” Thomas Hudson said. “Get your generator going and see if you can get Guantánamo.”

They ought to have something for us, he thought. “Did the prisoner talk?” he asked Peters.

“No sir.”

“Willie,” he asked. “How do you feel?”

“Fine.”

“Get some flashbulbs and take two, in profile of the face, lying on the stern. Take the blanket off and his shorts off and take one full-length lying as he is across the stern. Shoot one full-face of his head and one full-face lying down.”

“Yes sir,” Willie said.

Thomas Hudson went up on the flying bridge. He heard the motor of the generator start and saw the sudden flashes of the bulbs. ONI, up where they evaluate, won’t believe we even have this much of a Kraut, he thought. There isn’t any proof. Somebody will claim it is a stiff they pushed out that we picked up. I should have photographed him sooner. The hell with them. Maybe we will get the others tomorrow.

Ara came up.

“Tom, who do you want to have take him ashore and bury him?”

“Who’s worked the least today?”

“Everybody has worked hard. I’ll take Gil in and we will do it. We can bury him in the sand just above high water.”

“Maybe a little higher.”

“I’ll send Willie up and you tell him how you want the board lettered. I have a board from a box in stores.”

“Send Willie up.”

“Do we sew him up?”

“No. Just wrap him in his own blanket. Send Willie up.”

“What was it that you wanted?” Willie asked.

“Letter the board, ‘Unknown German Sailor’ and put the date underneath.”

“OK, Tom. Do you want me to go in with the burial detail?”

“No. Ara and Gil are going in. Letter the board and take it easy and have a drink.”

“As soon as Peters gets Guantánamo, I’ll send it up. Don’t you want to come down?”

“No. I’m taking it easy up here.”

“What’s it like on the bridge of a big ship like this, full of responsibility and horseshit?”

“Just about the same as lettering that board.”

When the signal came from Guantánamo it read, decoded, CONTINUE SEARCHING CAREFULLY WESTWARD.

That’s us, said Thomas Hudson to himself. He lay down and was asleep immediately and Henry covered him with a light blanket.

IX

An hour before daylight he was below and had checked his glass. It was four-tenths lower and he woke his mate and showed it to him.

The mate looked at him and nodded.

"You saw the squalls over Romano yesterday," he whispered. "She is going into the south."

"Make me some tea, will you, please," Thomas Hudson asked.

"I have some cold in a bottle on the ice."

He went astern and found a mop and a bucket and scrubbed the deck of the stern. It had been scrubbed before but he scrubbed it again and rinsed the mop. Then he took his bottle of cold tea up on the flying bridge and waited for it to get light.

Before it was light his mate got in the stern anchor and then with Ara brought in the starboard anchor and they and Gil hoisted the dinghy aboard. Then his mate pumped the bilges and checked his motors.

He put his head up and said, "Any time."

"Why did she make that much water?"

"Just a stuffing box. I tightened it a little. But I'd rather she made a little water than run hot."

"All right. Send up Ara and Henry. We'll get going."

They got in the anchor and he turned to Ara. "Show me the tree again."

Ara pointed it out just above the line of beach they were leaving and Thomas Hudson made a small pencilled cross on the chart.

"Peters never did get Guantánamo again?"

"No. He burned out once more."

“Well, we are behind them and they have other people ahead of them and we’ve got orders.”

“Do you think the wind will really go into the south, Tom?” Henry asked.

“The glass shows it will. We can tell better when it starts to get up.”

“It fell off to almost nothing about four o’clock.”

“Did the sand flies hit you?”

“Only at daylight.”

“You might as well go down and Flit them all out. There’s no sense our carrying them around with us.”

It was a lovely day and looking back at the bight where they had anchored and at the beach and the scrub trees of Cayo Cruz that they both knew so well, Thomas Hudson and Ara saw the high, piled clouds over the land. Cayo Romano rose so that it was like the mainland and the clouds were high above it with their promise of south wind or calm and land squalls.

“What would you think if you were a German, Ara?”

Thomas Hudson asked. “What would you think if you saw that and knew that you were going to lose your wind?”

“I’d try to get inside,” Ara said. “I think that’s what I’d do.”

“You’d need a guide for inside.”

“I’d get me a guide,” Ara said.

“Where would you get him?”

“From fishermen up at Antón or inside at Romano. Or at Coco. There must be fishermen salting fish along there now. There might even be a live-well boat at Antón.”

“We’ll try Antón,” Thomas Hudson said. “It’s nice to wake up in the morning and steer with the sun behind you.”

“If you always steered with the sun behind you and on a day like this, what a place the ocean would be.”

The day was like true summer and in the morning the squalls had not yet built. The day was all gentle promise and the sea lay

smooth and clear. They could see bottom clearly until they ran out of soundings, and then far out and just where it should be was the Minerva with the sea breaking restfully on its coral rocks. It was the swell that was left from the two months of unremitting heavy trade wind. But it broke gently and kindly and with a passive regularity.

It is as though she were saying we are all friends now and there will never be any trouble nor any wildness again, Thomas Hudson thought. Why is she so dishonest? A river can be treacherous and cruel and kind and friendly. A stream can be completely friendly and you can trust it all your life if you do not abuse it. But the ocean always has to lie to you before she does it.

He looked again at her gentle rise and fall that showed the Minervas as regularly and attractively as though she were trying to sell them as a choice location.

"Want to get me a sandwich?" he asked Ara. "Corned beef and raw onion or ham and egg and raw onion. After you get breakfast, bring a four-man watch up here and check all the binoculars. I'm going outside before we go in to Antón."

"Yes, Tom."

I wonder what I would do without that Ara, Thomas Hudson thought. You had a wonderful sleep, he told himself, and you couldn't feel better. We've got orders and we are right on their tails and pushing them toward other people. You're following your orders and look what a beautiful morning you have to follow them in. But things look too damned good.

They moved down the channel keeping a good lookout, but there was nothing but the calm, early morning sea with its friendly undulations and the long green line of Romano inland with the many keys between.

"They won't sail very far in this," Henry said.

"They won't sail at all," Thomas Hudson said.

"Are we going in to Antón?"

"Sure. And work all of that out."

“I like Antón,” Henry said. “There’s a good place to lay to, if it’s calm, so they won’t eat us up.”

“Inside they’d carry you away,” Ara said.

A small seaplane showed ahead, flying low and coming toward them. It was white and minute with the sun on it.

“Plane,” Thomas Hudson said. “Pass the word to get the big flag out.”

The plane came on until it buzzed them. Then it circled them twice and went off flying on down to the eastward.

“He wouldn’t have it so good if he found one,” Henry said. “They’d shoot him down.”

“He could send the location and Cayo Frances would pick it up.”

“Maybe,” Ara said. The two other Basques said nothing. They stood back to back and searched their quadrants.

After a while the Basque they called George because his name was Eugenio and Peters could not always say Eugenio said, “Plane’s coming back to the eastward between the outer keys and Romano.”

“He’s going home to breakfast,” Ara said.

“He’ll report us,” Thomas Hudson said. “So in a month maybe everybody will know where we were at this time today.”

“If he doesn’t get the location mixed up on his chart,” Ara said. “Paredón Grande, Tom. Bearing approximately twenty degrees off the port bow.”

“You’ve got good eyes,” Thomas Hudson said. “That’s her, all right. I better take her in and find the channel in to Antón.”

“Turn port ninety degrees and I think you’ll have her.”

“I’ll hit the bank anyway and we can run along it until we find that damned canal.”

They came in toward the line of green keys that showed like black hedges sticking up from the water and then acquired shape and greenness and finally sandy beaches. Thomas Hudson came in with reluctance from the open channel, the promising sea, and the beauty of the morning on deep water, to the business of searching

the inner keys. But the plane working the coast in this direction, turning to run over it with the sun behind it, should mean no one had picked the boats up to the eastward. It could be only a routine patrol, too. But it was logical that it should mean the other. A routine patrol would have been out over the channel both ways.

He saw Antón, which was well wooded and a pleasant island, growing before him and he watched ahead for his marks while he worked in toward the bank. He must take the highest tree on the head of the island and fit it squarely into the little saddle on Romano. On that bearing, he could come in even if the sun were in his eyes and the water had the glare of a burning glass.

Today he did not need it. But he did it for practice and when he found his tree, thinking, I should have something more permanent for a bearing on a hurricane coast, he eased along the bank until he fitted the tree carefully into the slot of the saddle, then turned sharp in. He was in the canal between marly banks that were barely covered with water and he said to Ara, "Ask Antonio to put a feather out. We might pick up something to eat. This channel has a wonderful bar on the bottom."

Then he steered straight in on his bearing. He was tempted not to look at the banks but to push it straight through. But then he knew that was one of the things of too much pride Ara had spoken of and he piloted carefully on the starboard bank and made his turn to starboard when it came by the banks and not by the second bearing that he had. It was like running in the regular streets of a new subdivision and the tide was racing in. It came in brown at first, then pure and clean. Just before he came into the part that he thought of as the turning basin where he planned to anchor, he heard Willie shout, "Feesh! FeeshI!" Looking astern, he saw a tarpon shaking himself high in the sun. His mouth was open and he was huge and the sun shone on his silvered scales and on the long green whip of his dorsal fin. He shook himself desperately in the sun and came down in a splash of water.

“Sábalo,” Antonio called up disgustedly.

“Worthless *sábalo*,” the Basques said.

“Can I play him, Tom?” Henry asked. “I’d like to catch him even if he is no good to eat.”

“Take him from Antonio if Willie hasn’t got him. Tell Antonio to get the hell forward. I’m going to anchor.”

The excitement and the leaping of the big tarpon continued astern, with no one paying attention to it except to grin, while they anchored.

“Do you want to put out another?” Thomas Hudson called forward. His mate shook his head. When they swung well to the anchor, his mate came up on the bridge.

“She’ll hold in anything, Tom,” he said. “Any kind of a squall. Anything. And it doesn’t make any difference how she swings, we can’t have any motion.”

“What time will we get the squalls.”

“After two,” his mate said, looking at the sky.

“Get the dinghy over,” Thomas Hudson said. “And give me an extra can of gas with the outboard. We have to get the hell going.”

“Who’s going with you?”

“Just Ara and Willie and I. I want her to travel fast.”

X

In the dinghy the three of them had their raincoats wrapped around the *niños.* These were the Thompson submachine guns in their full-length sheep-wool cases. The cases were cut and sewn by Ara, who was not a tailor, and Thomas Hudson had impregnated the clipped wool on the inside with a protective oil which had a faintly carbolic smell. It was because the guns nestled in their sheep-lined cradles, and because the cradles swung when they were strapped open inside the branch of the flying bridge, that the Basques had nicknamed them “little children.”

“Give us a bottle of water,” Thomas Hudson said to his mate. When Antonio brought it, heavy and cold with the wide, screw-on top, he passed it to Willie, who stowed it forward. Ara loved to steer the outboard and he was in the stern. Thomas Hudson was in the center and Willie crouched in the bow.

Ara headed her straight in for the key and Thomas Hudson watched the clouds piling up over the land.

As they came into the shallow water, Thomas Hudson could see the grayish humps of conches bulging from the sand. Ara leaned forward to say, “Do you want to look at the beach, Tom?”

“Maybe we’d better before the rain.”

Ara ran the dinghy ashore, tilting his motor up just at the last rush. The tide had undercut the sand to make a little channel at the point and he drove the boat in, slanting her up onto the sand.

“Home again,” Willie said. “What’s this bitch’s name?”

“Antón.”

“Not Antón Grande or Antón Chico or Antón El Cabron?”

"Just Antón. You take it up to that point to the eastward and then keep going. We'll pick you up. I'll work along this beach fast and Ara will leave the dinghy down somewhere past the next point and work on ahead. I'll pick him up in the dinghy and we'll come back around for you."

Willie had his *niño* wrapped in his raincoat and put it on his shoulder.

"If I find any Krauts, can I kill them?"

"The Colonel said all but one," Thomas Hudson said. "Try to save a smart one."

"I'll give them all IQ tests before I open up."

"Give yourself one."

"Mine's goddamn low or I wouldn't be here," Willie said, and he set out. He walked contemptuously and he watched the beach and the country ahead as carefully as a man could watch.

Thomas Hudson told Ara in Spanish what they were going to do and then shoved the dinghy off. He started down the beach with his *niño* under his arm and he felt the sand between his bare toes. Ahead, the dinghy was rounding the small point.

He was glad that he had come ashore and he walked as fast as he could go and still check the beach. It was a pleasant beach and he had no forebodings about it as he had had earlier in the day on the sea.

It was spooky this morning, he thought. Maybe it was just the calm. Ahead he could see the clouds still building up. But nothing had started to come out. There were no sand flies now in the hot sun and no mosquitoes and ahead of him he saw a tall white heron standing looking down in the shallow water with his head, neck, and beak poised. He had not flown when Ara passed with the dinghy.

We have to search it carefully even though I do not believe there is anything here, he thought. They are becalmed today so we lose nothing and it would be criminal to overrun them. Why don't I

know more about them? he thought. It is my own fault. I should have gone in and looked at the hut they built and at the tracks. I questioned Willie and Ara and they are both truly good. But I should have gone in myself.

It is the repugnance that I feel toward meeting them, he thought. It is my duty and I want to get them and I will. But I have a sort of fellow death-house feeling about them. Do people who are in the death house hate each other? I don't believe they do unless they are insane.

Just then the heron rose and flew further up the beach. Braking widely with his great white wings, and then taking a few awkward steps, he landed. I am sorry I disturbed him, Thomas Hudson thought.

He checked all of the beach above high tide. But there were no tracks except where one turtle had crawled twice. She had made a wide track to the sea and back and a wallowing depression where she had laid.

I haven't time to dig for the eggs, he thought. The clouds were beginning to darken and to move out.

If they had been on this side of the key they certainly would have dug for them. He looked ahead but he could not see the dinghy because there was another curving point.

He walked along just where the sand was firm from the dampness of the high tide and he saw the hermit crabs carrying their shells and the ghost crabs that slipped across the stretch of sand and into the water. To his right, in the shallow channel, he saw the grayness that a school of mullet made and their shadow on the sand bottom as they moved. He saw the shadow of a very big barracuda that was stalking the mullet and then he saw the lines of the fish, long, pale, and gray, and seeming not to move. He walked steadily and soon he was past the fish and was coming up on the heron again.

I'll see if I can pass him without making him fly, he thought.

But just when he was coming almost even with the heron, the school of mullet burst from the water jumping stiffly, big-eyed and blunt-headed, silvery in the sun but not beautiful. Thomas Hudson turned to watch them and to try to see the barracuda who was cutting into them. He could not see the predatory fish; only the wild leaping of the frightened mullet. Then he saw that the school was reformed into a gray moving mass and when he turned his head the heron was gone. He saw him flying with his white wings over the green water and ahead was the yellow sand beach and the line of the trees along the point. The clouds were beginning to darken behind Romano and he walked faster to round the point and see where Ara had left the dinghy.

Walking faster gave him an erection and he thought there can't be any Krauts around. That wouldn't happen if there were any Krauts around. I don't know, he thought. It could happen if you were wrong enough and didn't know it.

At the end of the point there was a patch of bright white sand and he thought, I'd like to lie down here. This would be a good place. Then he saw the dinghy at the end of the long beach and he thought, the hell with it. I'll sleep tonight and I will love the air mattress or the deck. I might as well love the deck. We have been around together long enough to get married. There is probably a lot of talk about you and the flying bridge now, he thought. You ought to do right by her. And all you do is step on her and stand on her. What sort of a way is that to act? And spill cold tea on her, too. That's not nice. What are you saving her for anyway? To die on her? She would certainly appreciate that. Walk on her, stand on her, and die on her. Treat her really nice. One thing practical you can do now is cut out this crap and get this beach checked and pick up Ara.

He walked on down the beach and he tried not to think at all but only to notice things. He knew his duty very well and he had tried never to shirk it. But today he had come ashore when someone

else could have done it just as well, but when he stayed aboard and they found nothing, he felt guilty. He watched everything. But he could not keep from thinking.

Maybe Willie's side is hotter, he thought. Maybe Ara will have hit something. I know damn well this is where I would come if I were they. It is the first good place. They might have passed it and gone straight on. Or they might have turned in between Paredón and Cruz. But I don't believe they would because somebody would see them from the light and they never could get in and through there at night, guide or no guide. I think they will have gone further down. Maybe we will find them down by Coco. Maybe we'll find them right in behind here. There's another key that we ought to work out. I must remember that they are always working on the chart. That is, unless they picked up a fisherman here. I haven't seen any smoke from anybody burning charcoal. Well, I am glad we will get this key worked out before the rain. I love doing it, he thought. I just don't like the end.

He shoved off the dinghy and stepped into her, washing the sand off his feet as he got in. He stowed the *niño,* in its rubber coat, where he could reach it and started the motor. He had no love for the outboard as Ara had and he never started it without remembering blowing out and sucking out clogged fuel lines and remembering shorted plugs and other delights of the small motor. But Ara never had ignition trouble. When the motor misfunctioned, he regarded it as a chess player might admire a brilliant move on the part of his opponent.

Thomas Hudson steered along the beach but Ara was far ahead and he could not see him. He must be halfway to Willie, he thought. But when he saw him he was nearly to the mangrove bay where the sand stopped and the mangroves grew heavy and green into the water, their roots showing like tangled brown sticks.

Then he noticed the mast sticking up out of the mangroves.

It was all he could see. But he could see Ara was lying behind a

small sand dune so that he could just see over the top.

He could feel his scalp prickle as it does when you meet a car coming fast, suddenly, on the wrong side of the road. But Ara heard the motor and turned his head, and waved him in. Thomas came in on a tangent behind Ara.

The Basque came aboard carrying his raincoated *niño,* barrel first, over the right shoulder of his old striped beach shirt. He looked pleased.

"Get as far out as the channel will let you," he said. "We'll find Willie."

"Is it one of the boats?"

"Sure," Ara said. "But I'm sure it's abandoned. It's going to rain, Tom."

"Did you see anything?"

"Nothing."

"Me either."

"It's a nice key. I found an old trail to water. But it wasn't used."

"There's water on Willie's side, too."

"There's Willie," Ara said. He was sitting on the sand. His legs were drawn up and his *niño* was in his lap. Thomas Hudson ran the dinghy in to him. Willie looked at them, his black hair down over his forehead and wet with sweat and his good eye blue and mean.

"Where you two fuck-offs been?" he asked. "When were they here, Willie?"

"Yesterday by the turds," Willie said. "Or should I say their excrement?"

"How many?"

"Eight that could execremenate and three of these with the bubbleshits."

"What else?"

"They got a guide or a pilot or whatever his rating is."

The guide they had picked up was a fisherman who had a palm-thatched shelter and had been salting barracuda strips on a rack to

sell them later to the Chinese who bought fish for the Chinese retail grocers who would sell the dried fish in their shops as codfish. The fisherman had salted and dried a good quantity of fish by the looks of the rack.

"Krauts eat 'em plenty codfish now on in," Willie said.

"What language is that?"

"My own," Willie said. "Everybody has a private language around here, like Basque or something. You got an objection if I speak mine?"

"Tell me the rest."

"Sleepum here one smoke," Willie said. "Eatum pig meat. All sameee from Massacre Key. Kraut master no gottum tin goods or save 'em."

"Cut out the shit and tell it straight."

"Ole Massa Hudson going to lose all afternoon anyway due huge rainfall accompanied squall winds all along same. Might as well listen alongside Willie all same famous scout of the Pampas. Willie tell his own way."

"Cut it out."

"Listen, Tom, who found Krauts twice?"

"What about the boat?"

"Boat all same finish. She alongside too many rotten planks. One drop out by stern."

"They hit something coming in with a bad light."

"I guess so. Well, I'll cut out the shit. They've gone on into the westward sun. Eight men and a guide. Maybe nine if the captain couldn't shit on account of his great responsibilities like our own leader himself has trouble sometimes and now it is starting to rain. The boat they left was stunk up and beshat with pigs and chickens and that comrade we buried. There's one other guy is wounded but it doesn't look bad from the dressing."

"Pussy?"

"Yeah. But clean pus. You want to see it all or you take my word

for it?"

"I take your word on all of it but I want to see it."

He saw everything, the tracks, the fire, where they had slept and cooked, the dressing, the part of the brush they had used as a latrine, and the groove the turtle boat had made in the sand when they beached her. It was raining hard now and the first gusts of the squall were coming.

"Put on the coats and put the *niños* under them," Ara said.

"I have to take them down tonight anyway."

"I'll help you," Willie said. "We're breathing down their necks, Tom."

"There's an awful lot of country and they have someone with local knowledge now."

"You just keep thinking the way you are," Willie said.

"What local knowledge has he got that we haven't got?"

"Certainly he'll have plenty."

"The hell with him. I'm going to wash on the stern with soap. Jesus, I want to feel that fresh water and that soap."

It was raining so hard now that it was hard to see the ship as they came around the point. The squall had moved out toward the ocean and it was so violent and the rain so heavy that trying to see the ship was like looking at an object from behind a falls. Her tanks will fill like nothing with this, Thomas Hudson thought. She'll probably be running off through the galley faucets and the head right now.

"How many days since it rained, Tom?" Willie asked.

"We'll have to check with the log. It's something over fifty."

"It's like the goddamn monsoon breaking," Willie said. "Give me a gourd so I can bail."

"Keep the cover on your *niño* dry."

"Her butt is in my crotch and her nose is under the left shoulder of my coat," Willie said. "She never had it better in her life. Give me the gourd."

On the stern they were all bathing naked. They soaped themselves and stood on one foot and another, bending against the lashing of the rain as they soaped and then leaning back into it. They were really all brown but they looked white in this strange light. Thomas Hudson thought of the canvas of the bathers by Cezanne and then he thought he would like to have Eakins paint it. Then he thought that he should be painting it himself with the ship against the roaring white of the surf that came through the driving gray outside with the black of the new squall coming out and the sun breaking through momentarily to make the driving rain silver and to shine on the bathers in the stern.

He brought the dinghy up and Ara tossed a line and they were home.

XI

That night after the rain had stopped and he had checked all leaks from the long dry spell, and seen that pans were put under them, and the point of actual leakage, not the drip, was pencilled, the watches were set, the duties apportioned, and everything discussed and agreed on with his mate and Ara. Then when the supper was ended and the poker game underway, he went up on the flying bridge. He had a Flit gun with him and his air mattress and a light blanket.

He thought that he would lie down and think about nothing. Sometimes he could do this. Sometimes he could think about the stars without wondering about them and the ocean without problems and the sunrise without what it would bring.

He felt clean from his scalp to his feet from the soaping in the rain that had beaten down on the stern and he thought, I will just lie here and feel clean. He knew there was no use thinking of the girl who had been Tom's mother nor all the things they had done and the places they had been nor how they had broken up. There was no use thinking about Tom. He had stopped that as soon as he had heard.

There was no use thinking about the others. He had lost them, too, and there was no use thinking about them. He had traded in remorse for another horse that he was riding now. So lie here now and feel clean from the soap and the rain and do a good job at nonthinking. You learned to do it quite well for a while. Maybe you will go to sleep and have funny or good dreams. Just lie quiet and watch the night and don't think. Ara or Henry will wake you if

Peters gets anything.

He was asleep in a little while. He was a boy again and riding up a steep canyon. The canyon opened out and there was a sandbar by the clear river that was so clear he could see the pebbles in the bed of the stream and then watch the cuthroat trout at the foot of the pool as they rose to flies that floated down the current. He was sitting on his horse and watching the trout rise when Ara woke him.

The message read CONTINUE SEARCH CAREFULLY WESTWARD with the code name at the end.

"Thanks," he said. "Let me have anything else."

"Of course. Go back to sleep, Tom."

"I was having a fine dream."

"Don't tell it to me," Ara said. "And maybe it will come true."

He went to sleep again and when he went to sleep he smiled because he thought that he was carrying out orders and continuing the search westward. I have her pretty far west, he thought. I don't think they meant this far west.

He slept and he dreamed that the cabin was burned and someone had killed his fawn that had grown into a young buck. Someone had killed his dog and he found him by a tree and he woke sweating.

I guess dreams aren't the solution, he said to himself. I might as well take it the same as always without any hope of anesthetics. Go on and think it out.

All you have now is a basic problem and your intermediate problems. That is all you have so you better like it. You will never have good dreams any more so you might as well not sleep. Just rest and use your head until it won't work anymore, and when you go to sleep, expect to have the horrors. The horrors were what you won in that big crap game that they run. You put it on the line and made your point and let it ride and finally you dragged down the gift of uneasy unpleasant sleep. You damned near dragged down not sleeping at all. But you traded that in for what you have so you

might as well like it. You're sleepy now. So sleep and figure to wake up sweating. And what of it? Nothing at all of it. But do you remember when you used to sleep all night with the girl and always happy and never woke unless she woke you to make love? Remember that, Thomas Hudson, and see how much good it will do you.

I wonder how many dressings they have for that other wounded character? If they had time to get dressings they had time to get other stuff, too. What stuff? What do you think they have besides what you know they have? I don't think much. Maybe pistols and a few machine pistols. Maybe some demolition charges they could make something out of. I have to figure that they have the machine gun. But I don't think so. They wouldn't want to fight. They want to get the hell away and on a Spanish ship. If they had been in shape to fight they would have come back that night and taken Confites. Maybe no. Maybe something made them suspicious and they saw our drums on the beach and thought we might be basing there nights. They wouldn't know what we were. But they would see the drums and figure there was something around that burned plenty of gas. Then too they probably didn't want to fight with their wounded. But the boat with the wounded could have laid off at night while they came in and took the wireless station if they wanted to get off with that other sub. I wonder what happened with her. There's something very strange about that.

Think about something cheerful. Think about how you start with the sun at your back. And remember they have local knowledge now, along with all that salt fish, and you are going to have to use your head. He went to sleep and slept quite well until two hours before daylight when the sand flies awakened him. Thinking about the problems had made him feel better and he slept without dreaming.

XII

They left before the sun was up and Thomas Hudson steered down the channel that was like a canal with the gray banks showing on either side. By the time the sun was up he was out through the cut between the shoals and he steered due north to get into blue water and past the dangerous rocky heads of the outer reef. It was a little longer than running on the inside but it was much safer.

When the sun rose, there was no wind and not enough swell for the sea to break on any of the rocks. The day would be hot and muggy, he knew, and there would be squalls in the afternoon.

His mate came up and looked around. Then he looked carefully at the land and along it to where the high, ugly tower of the light showed.

"We could have run down easily on the inside."

"I know it," Thomas Hudson said. "But I thought this was better."

"Another day like yesterday. But hotter."

"They can't make much time."

"They can't make any time. They're becalmed somewhere. You're going to check with the light whether they went into the cut between Paredón and Coco, aren't you?"

"Sure."

"I'll go in. I know the keeper. You can lay just inside the little key at the tip. I won't be gone long," Antonio said.

"I don't even need to anchor."

"You've got plenty of strong-backed people to get anchors up."

"Send up Ara and Willie if they've eaten. Nothing should show

here this close to the light and you can't see a damned thing looking into the sun. But send up George and Henry, too. We might as well do it right."

"Remember the rocks make right up to your blue water here, Tom."

"I remember and I can see them."

"Do you want your tea cold?"

"Please. And a sandwich. Send the men up first."

"They'll be right up. I'll send the tea up and have everything ready to go ashore."

"Be careful how you talk to them."

"That's why I am going in."

"Put out a couple of lines, too. It will look better coming in on the light."

"Yes," his mate said. "We might get something we could give them at the light."

The four came up and took their usual posts and Henry said, "Did you see anything, Tom?"

"One turtle with a sea gull flying around him. I thought he was going to perch on his back. But he didn't."

"Mi capitán," said George, who was a taller Basque than Ara and a good athlete and fine seaman, but not nearly as strong as Ara in many ways.

"Mi señor obispo," said Thomas Hudson.

"OK, Tom," George said. "If I see any really big submarines do you want me to tell you?"

"If you see one as big as you saw that one time keep it to yourself."

"I dream about her nights," George said.

"Don't talk about her," Willie said. "I just ate breakfast."

"When we closed I could feel my *cojones* going up like an elevator," Ara said. "How did you really feel, Tom?"

"Scared."

“I saw her come up,” Ara said. “And the next thing I heard Henry say, ‘She’s an aircraft carrier, Tom.’”

“That’s what she looked like,” Henry said. “I can’t help it. I’d say the same thing again.”

“She spoiled my life,” Willie said. “I’ve never been the same since. For a nickel I’d have never gone to sea again.”

“Here,” said Henry. “Take twenty cents and get off at Paredón Grande. Maybe they’ll give you change.”

“I don’t want change. I’ll take a transfer.”

“Would you really?” Henry asked. There had been a certain amount of bad blood between them since the last two times they had been in Havana.

“Listen, expensive,” Willie said. “We’re not fighting submarines or you wouldn’t have come up without sneaking a quick one. We’re only chasing Krauts to kill them in a decked-over half-open boat. Even you ought to be able to do that.”

“Take the twenty cents anyway,” Henry said. “You’ll need it someday.”

“To stick up—”

“Cut it out the two of you. *Cut it out,”* Thomas Hudson said. He looked at both of them.

“I’m sorry, Tom,” Henry said.

“I’m not sorry,” Willie said. “But I apologize.”

“Look, Tom,” said Ara. “Almost abeam inshore.”

“That’s the rock that’s just awash,” Thomas Hudson said. “It shows further to the eastward on the chart.”

“No. I mean further in about a half a mile.”

“That’s a man crawfishing or hauling fish traps.”

“Do you think we ought to speak to him?”

“He’s from the light and Antonio’s going in to talk with them at the light.”

“Feesh! Feesh!” his mate called and Henry asked, “May take him, Tom?”

"Sure. Send Gil up."

Henry went down and in a little while the fish jumped and showed he was a barracuda. Then, a little later, he heard Antonio grunt as he hit him with the gaff and then he heard the thunking knocks of the club on its head. He waited for the splash of the fish being thrown back and looked at the wake to see his size. There was no splash and he remembered that barracuda were good to eat on this stretch of the coast and Antonio was saving him to take in to the light. Just then he heard the double shout of "Feesh!" and this time there was no jumping and the line was singing out. He turned out further into the blue water and slowed down both engines. Then as the line kept going out he threw out one motor and made a half-turn toward the fish.

"Wahoo," his mate called up. "Big one."

Henry brought the fish in and they looked down over the stern and saw him long and oddly pointed, his stripes showing clearly in the blueness of the deep water. When he was nearly within reach of the gaff he turned his head and made another fast deep run that took him out of sight in the clear water in less time than a man could snap his fingers.

"They always have that one run," Ara said. "It goes like a bullet."

Henry brought him in fast and they watched over the stern as he was gaffed and brought aboard rigid and trembling. His stripes showed a bright blue and his jaws, that could cut like razors, opened and closed with spasmodic uselessness. Antonio laid him in the stern and his tail beat against the deck.

"¡Qué peto más hermoso!" Ara said.

"He's a beautiful wahoo," Thomas Hudson agreed. "But we'll be out here all morning if this keeps up. Leave out the lines but take the leaders off," he said to his mate. He steered for just outside the light on its high point of rock and tried to make up the time they had lost and still act as though they were fishing. The friction of the

lines in the water bent the rods.

Henry came up and said, “He was a beautiful fish, wasn’t he? I’d love to have had him on light tackle. Don’t they have an extraordinarily shaped head?”

“What will he weigh?” Willie asked.

“Antonio said he’d weigh about sixty, Willie. I was sorry I didn’t have time to call you. He really should have been yours.”

“That’s all right,” Willie said. “You caught him faster than I could and we have to get the hell along. I bet we could catch plenty good fish all along here.”

“We’ll come sometime after the war.”

“I’ll bet,” said Willie. “After the war I’m going to be in Hollywood and be a technical adviser on how to be a horse’s ass at sea.”

“You’ll be good at it.”

“I ought to be. I’ve been studying it now for over a year to train me for my career.”

“What the hell have you got so much black ass about today, Willie?” Thomas Hudson asked.

“I don’t know. I woke up with it.”

“Well, go down to the galley and see if that bottle of tea is cold and bring it up. Antonio’s butchering the fish. So make a sandwich will you, please?”

“Sure. What kind of sandwich?”

“Peanut butter and onion if there’s plenty of onion.”

“Peanut butter and onion it is, sir.”

“And try to get rid of your black ass.”

“Yes sir. Black ass gone, sir.”

When he was gone Thomas Hudson said, “You take it easy with him, Henry. I need the son of a bitch and he’s good at his stuff. He’s just got black ass.”

“I try to be good with him. But he’s difficult.”

“Well try a little harder. You were needling him about the

twenty cents."

Thomas Hudson looked ahead at the smooth sea and the innocent-looking deadliness of the reef off his port bow. He loved to run just off a bad reef with the light behind him. It made up for the times when he had to steer into the sun and it made up for several other things.

"I'm sorry, Tom," Henry said. "I'll watch what I say and what I think."

Willie was back up with the empty rum bottle full of tea wrapped in a paper towel and with two rubber bands around it to keep the towel in place.

"She's cold, skipper," he said. "And I have insulated her."

He handed a sandwich, wrapped in a paper towel segment, to Thomas Hudson and said, "One of the highest points in the sandwich-maker's art. We call it the Mount Everest Special. For Commanders only."

In the calm, even on the bridge, Thomas Hudson smelled his breath.

"Don't you think it's a little early in the day, Willie?"

"No sir."

Thomas Hudson looked at him speculatively. "What did you say, Willie?"

"No sir. Didn't you hear me, sir?"

"OK," Thomas Hudson said. "I heard you twice. You hear this once. Go below. Clean up the galley properly and then go up in the bow where I can see you and stand by to anchor."

"Yes sir," said Willie. "I don't feel well, sir."

"Fuck how you feel, you sea lawyer. If you don't feel well you are going to feel a damned sight worse."

"Yes sir," Willie said. "I don't feel well, sir. I should see the ship's surgeon."

"You'll find him in the bow. Knock on the door of the head and see if he's there as you go by."

“That’s what I mean, sir.”

“What do you mean?”

“Nothing, sir.”

“He’s skunk-drunk,” Henry said.

“No, he’s not,” Thomas Hudson said. “He’s drinking. But he’s closer to crazy.”

“He’s been strange for quite a while,” Ara said. “But he was always strange. None of us has ever suffered as he has. I have never even suffered at all.”

“Tom’s suffered,” Henry said. “And he’s drinking cold tea.”

“Let’s not talk morbid and let’s not talk wet,” Thomas Hudson said. “I never suffered and I like cold tea.”

“You never did before.”

“We learn something new all the time, Henry.”

He was coming up well on the light and he saw the rock he should keep outside of now, and he thought this was a worthless conversation.

“Go up forward with him, Ara, and see how he’s doing. Stick around with him. You get the lines in, Henry. George, get down and help Antonio with the dinghy. Go in with him if he wants you to.”

When he was alone on the bridge he smelled the bird guano from the rock and he rounded the point and anchored in two fathoms of water. The bottom was clean and there was a big tide running. He looked up at the white-painted house and the tall old-fashioned light and then past the high rock to the green mangrove keys and beyond them the low, rocky, barren tip of Cayo Romano. They had lived, off and on, for such a long time within sight of that long, strange, and pest-ridden key and knew a part of it so well and had come in on its landmarks so many times and under such good and bad circumstances that it always made him an emotion to sight it or to leave it out of sight. Now it was there at its barest and most barren, jutting out like a scrubby desert.

There were wild horses and wild cattle and wild hogs on that

great key and he wondered how many people had held the illusion that they might colonize it. It had hills rich in grass with beautiful valleys and fine stands of timber and once there had been a settlement called Versailles where Frenchmen had made their attempt at living on Romano.

Now all the frame buildings were abandoned but the one big house and one time when Thomas Hudson had gone in there to fill water, the dogs from the shacks were huddled with the pigs that had burrowed in the mud and dogs and pigs both were gray from the solid blanket of mosquitoes that covered them. It was a wonderful key when the east wind blew day and night and you could walk two days with a gun and be in good country. It was country as unspoiled as when Columbus came to this coast. Then, when the wind dropped, the mosquitoes came in clouds from the marshes. To say they came in clouds, he thought, is not a metaphor. They truly came in clouds and they could bleed a man to death. The people we are searching for would not have stopped in Romano. Not with this calm. They must have gone further up the coast.

"Ara," he called.

"What is it, Tom?" Ara asked. He always swung up onto the bridge and landed as lightly as an acrobat but with the weight of steel.

"What's the score?"

"Willie's not himself, Tom. I took him out of the sun and I made him a drink and made him lie down. He's quiet now but he looks at things too fixedly."

"Maybe he had too much sun on his bad head."

"Maybe. Maybe it is something else."

"What else?"

"Gil and Peters are sleeping. Gil had the duty to keep Peters awake last night. Henry is sleeping and George went in with Antonio."

"They should be back soon."

"They will be."

"We must keep Willie out of the sun. I was stupid to send him forward. But I did it for discipline, without thinking."

"I am disassembling and cleaning the big ones and I checked all the fuses from the dampness and rain of last night on the other stuff. Last night after the poker game we disassembled and cleaned and oiled everything."

"Now, with the dampness, we have to make a daily check, whether anything is fired or not."

"I know," Ara said. "We ought to disembark Willie. But we can't do it here."

"Cayo Francés?"

"We could. But Havana would be better and have them ship him from there. He's going to talk, Tom."

Thomas Hudson thought of something and regretted it.

"We never should have taken him after he had a medical discharge and with the bad head," Ara said.

"I know. But we did. How many damn mistakes have we made?"

"Not too many," Ara said. "Now may I go down and finish the work?"

"Yes," Thomas Hudson said. "Thank you very much."

"A sus órdenes," Ara said.

"I wish to hell they were better orders," Thomas Hudson said.

Antonio and George were coming out with the dinghy and Antonio came up on the bridge immediately and let George and Henry hoist the motor and the dinghy aboard.

"Well?" Thomas Hudson said.

"They must have gone by in the night on the last of the breeze," Antonio said. "They would have seen them at the light if they came into the cut. The old man who has the skiff and the fish traps hadn't seen any turtle boat. He talks about everything and he would have mentioned it, the lightkeeper said. Do you think we ought to go back and check with him?"

"No. I think they're down at Puerto Coco or else at Guillermo."

"That's about where they would have reached with what wind they had."

"You're sure they couldn't have gone through the cut at night?"

"Not with the best pilot that ever lived."

"Then we have to find them in the lee of Coco or down by Guillermo. Let's get the anchor up and go."

It was a very dirty coast and he kept outside of everything and ran the edge of the hundred-fathom curve. Inshore there was a low rocky coast and reefs and big patches of banks that came out dry with the low tide. There was a four-man watch and Gil was on Thomas Hudson's left. Thomas Hudson looked toward the shore and saw the beginning of the green of the mangroves and thought, what a hell of a place to be now in this calm. The clouds were piled high already and he thought the squalls would come out earlier. There are about three places past Puerto Coco that I must search, he thought. I had better hook her up a little more and get in there.

"Henry," he said. "Steer 285 will you? I want to go below and see Willie. Sing out if you sight anything. You don't need to watch inshore, Gil. Take the starboard watch forward. That's all too shallow inshore for them to be in there."

"I'd like to watch inshore," Gil said. "If you don't mind, Tom. There's that crazy channel that makes in almost against the beach and the guide could have taken them there and put them in the mangroves."

"Good," said Thomas Hudson. "I'll send up Antonio."

"I could see her mast in the mangroves with these big glasses."

"I doubt it like hell. But you might."

"Please, Tom. If you don't mind."

"I agreed already."

"I'm sorry, Tom. But I thought a guide might take her ill there. We went in there once."

"And we had to come out the same way we went in."

“I know. But if the wind failed them and they had to hide in a hurry. We don’t want to overrun them.”

“Right. But we are a long way out for you to see a mast. Besides they would probably cut mangroves to hide the mast from the air.”

“I know,” Gil said with Spanish stubbornness. “But I have very good eyes and these are twelve-power glasses and it is calm so I see well and—”

“I said it was OK before.”

“I know. But I had to explain.”

“You’ve explained,” Thomas Hudson said. “And if you find a mast you can stick it up my ass with peanuts on it.”

Gil felt a little hurt at this but he thought it was funny, especially about the peanuts, and he searched the mangroves until the big glasses almost pulled the eyes out of his head.

Below, Thomas Hudson was talking with Willie and watching the sea and the land. It was always strange how much less you saw when you were down from the bridge, and, as long as things went well below, he felt a fool to be anywhere but at his post. He tried always to keep the necessary contact and avoid the idiocy of the uninspecting inspection. But he had delegated more and more authority to Antonio, who was a much better sailor than he was, and to Ara who was a much better man. They are both better men than I am, he thought, and yet I still should be in command, using their knowledge and talent and their characters.

“Willie,” he said. “How are you really?”

“I’m sorry about acting like a fool. But I’m sort of bad, Tom.”

“You know the rules about drinking,” Thomas Hudson said.

“There aren’t any. I don’t want to use chickenshit words like the honor system.”

“I know,” Willie said. “You know I’m not a rummy.”

“We don’t ship rummies.”

“Except Peters.”

“We didn’t ship him. They gave him to us. He has his problems,

too."

"Old Angus is his problem," Willie said. "And his goddamn problems get to be our problems too damn fast."

"We'll skip him," Thomas Hudson said. "You have anything else eating you?"

"Just in general."

"How?"

"Well I'm half crazy and you're half crazy and then we've got this crew of half saints and desperate men."

"It isn't bad to be half saint and half desperate man."

"I know it. It's wonderful. But I was used to things being more regular."

"Willie, there's nothing eating you really. The sun bothers your head and I'm sure drinking isn't good for it."

"I'm sure, too," Willie said. "I'm not trying to be a fuck-up, Tom. But did you ever go really crazy?"

"No. I always missed it."

"It's a lot of bother," Willie said. "And however long it lasts, it lasts too long. But I'll stop drinking."

"No. Just drink easy like you always did."

"I was using the drinking to stave it off."

"We're always using drinking for something."

"Sure. But this wasn't any gag. Do you think I'd lie to you, Tom?"

"We all lie. But I don't think you'd lie on purpose."

"Go on up on your bridge," Willie said. "I see you watching the water all the time like it was some girl that was going to get away from you. I won't drink anything except sea water maybe and I'll help Ara break them to pieces and put them together again."

"Don't drink, Willie."

"If I said I won't, I won't."

"I know."

"Listen, Tom. Can I ask you something?"

“Anything.”

“How bad is it with you?”

“I guess pretty bad.”

“Can you sleep?”

“Not much.”

“Last night?”

“Yes.”

“That was from walking the beach,” Willie said. “Go on up and forget about me. I’ll be working with Ara at our trade.”

XIII

They had searched the beach for tracks at Puerto Coco and they searched the mangroves beyond with the dinghy. There were some really good places for a turtle boat to hide. But they found nothing and the squalls came out earlier with heavy rain that made the sea look as though it were leaping into the air in white, spurting jets.

Thomas Hudson had walked the beach and gone back inland behind the lagoon. He had found the place where the flamingoes came at high tide and he had seen many wood ibis, the *cocos* that gave the key its name, and a pair of roseate spoonbills working in the marl of the edge of the lagoon. They were beautiful with the sharp rose of their color against the gray marl and their delicate, quick, forward-running movements, and they had the dreadful, hunger-ridden impersonality of certain wading birds. He could not watch them long because he wanted to check in case the people they were looking for had left the boat in the mangroves and camped in the high ground to be clear of the mosquitoes.

He found nothing but the site of an old charcoal-burning and he came out onto the beach after the first squall hit and Ara had picked him up in the dinghy.

Ara loved running the outboard in the rain and a bad squall and he had told Thomas Hudson none of the searchers had found anything. Everybody was on board but Willie who had taken the furthest stretch of beach beyond the mangroves.

"And you?" Ara asked.

"Me, nothing."

"This rain will cool off Willie. I'm going to get him when I put

you on board. Where do you think they are, Tom?"

"At Guillermo. That's where I'd be."

"Me too. That's what Willie thinks, too."

"How was he?"

"He's trying hard, Tom. You know Willie."

"Yes," said Thomas Hudson. They came alongside and he climbed aboard.

Thomas Hudson watched Ara pivot the dinghy on her stern and go off into the white squall. Then he called down for a towel and dried himself off on the stern.

Henry said, "Don't you want a drink, Tom? You were really wet."

"I'd like one."

"Do you want straight rum?"

"That's nice," Thomas Hudson answered. He went below to get a sweatshirt and shorts and he saw that they were all cheerful.

"We all had a straight rum," Henry said and brought him a glass half-full. "I don't think that way if you dry off quickly anyone can catch cold. Do you?"

"Hi, Tom," said Peters. "Have you joined our little group of health drinkers?"

"When did you wake up?" Thomas Hudson asked him.

"When I heard a gurgling noise."

"I'll make a gurgling noise some night and see if that wakes you up."

"Don't worry, Tom. Willie does that for me every night."

Thomas Hudson decided not to drink the rum. Then, seeing them all having had a drink and being cheerful and happy on an uncheerful errand, he thought it would be pompous and priggish not to take it. He wanted it, too.

"Split this with me," he said to Peters. "You are the only son of a bitch I ever knew that could sleep better with earphones on than without them."

“That split’s nothing,” Peters said, entrenching himself in the retreat from formal discipline. “That split doesn’t give either of us anything.”

“Get one of your own, then,” Thomas Hudson said. “I like the goddamn stuff as well as you do.”

The others were watching and Thomas Hudson could see Henry’s jaw muscles twitching.

“Drink it up,” Thomas Hudson said. “And run all your mysterious machines tonight as well as you can. For yourself and for the rest of us.”

“For all of us,” Peters said. “Who is the hardest-working man on this ship?”

“Ara,” Thomas Hudson said and sipped the rum for the first time as he looked around. “And every fucking body else on board.”

“Here’s to you, Tom,” Peters said.

“Here’s to you,” Thomas Hudson said and felt the words die cold and stale in his mouth. “To the earphone king,” he said, in order to recover something he had lost. “To all gurgling noises,” he added, being now a long way ahead as he should have been at the start.

“To my commander,” Peters said, running his string out too far.

“Any way you want to take it,” Thomas Hudson said. “There are no articles that cover that with us. But I’ll settle for that. Say it again.”

“To you, Tom.”

“Thanks,” Thomas Hudson said. “But I will be a sad son of a bitch before I drink to you until all your radios and you are functioning.”

Peters looked at him and into his face there came the discipline and into his body, which was in bad shape, the carriage of a man who had served three hitches in something that he had believed in and left for something else, as Willie had, and he said, automatically and without reservations, “Yes sir.”

“Drink to you,” Thomas Hudson said. “And crank up all your

fucking miracles."

"Yes, Tom," Peters said, without any cheating and without reservations.

Well, I guess that is enough of that, Thomas Hudson thought. I better leave it as it lays and go back to the stern and watch my other problem child come aboard. I can never feel about Peters the way the rest of them all feel. I hope I know as well as they do what his defects are. But he has something. He is like the false carried so far that it is made true. It is certain that he is not up to handling what we have. But maybe he is up to much better things.

Willie's the same, he thought. One is as bad one way as the other. They ought to be in now.

He saw the dinghy coming through the rain and the white drifted water that curled and blew under the lash of the wind. They were both thoroughly wet when they came aboard. They had not used their raincoats but had kept them wrapped around their *niños.*

"Hi, Tom," Willie said. "Nothing but a wet ass and a hungry gut."

"Take these children," Ara said and handed the wrapped submachine guns aboard.

"Nothing?"

"Nothing multiplied by ten," Willie said. He was standing on the stern dripping and Thomas Hudson called to Gil to bring two towels.

Ara pulled the dinghy in by her painter and climbed aboard. "Nothing of nothing of nothing," he said. "Tom, do we get overtime for rain?"

"We ought to clean those weapons right away," Willie said.

"We'll get dry first," Ara said. "I'm wet enough. First I could never get wet and now I have gooseflesh even on my ass."

"Tom," Willie said. "You know those sons of bitches can sail in these squalls if they reef down and have the balls to."

"I thought of that too."

“I think they lay up in the daytime with the calm and then run with these afternoon squalls.”

“Where do you put them?”

“I don’t put them past Guillermo. But they could be.”

“We’ll start at daylight and catch them at Guillermo tomorrow.”

“Maybe we’ll find them and maybe they’ll be gone.”

“Sure.”

“Why the hell haven’t we got radar?”

“What good would it do us right now? What do you see in the screen, Willie?”

“I’ll pipe the hell down,” Willie said. “Excuse me, Tom. But chasing something with UHF that hasn’t got a radio . . . ?”

“I know,” said Thomas Hudson. “But do you want to chase any better than we’ve been chasing?”

“Yes. Is that OK?”

“OK.”

“I want to catch the sons of bitches and kill every one of them.”

“What good would that do?”

“You don’t remember the massacre?”

“Don’t give me any of that massacre shit, Willie. You’ve been around too long for that.”

“OK. I just want to kill them. Is that all right?”

“It’s better than the massacre thing. But I want prisoners from a U-boat operating in these waters who can talk.”

“That last one you had didn’t talk much.”

“No. Neither would you if you were up the creek like he was.”

“OK,” Willie said. “Can I draw a slug of the legal?”

“Sure. Get on dry shorts and a shirt and don’t make trouble.”

“With nobody?”

“Grow up,” Thomas Hudson said.

“Drop dead,” Willie said and grinned.

“That’s the way I like you,” Thomas Hudson told him.

“Keep it that way.”

XIV

That night there was heavy lightning and thunder and it rained until about three o'clock in the morning. Peters could get nothing on the radio and they all slept hot and muggy until the sand flies came out after the rain stopped and wakened them, one after the other. Thomas Hudson pumped Flit down below and there was coughing and then less restless moving and slapping.

He waked Peters by Flitting him thoroughly and Peters shook his head with the earphones on and said softly, "I've been trying hard, Tom, all the time. But there's nothing."

Thomas Hudson looked at the glass with a torch and it was rising. That will give them a breeze, he thought. Well, they can't say they haven't had luck again. Now I must figure that.

He went back to the stern and sprayed all the Flit he could into the cabin without waking the people.

He sat in the stern and watched the night clear and flitted himself occasionally. They were short of repellent but had plenty of Flit. It burned where a man had been sweating but it was better than sand flies. Their effect differed from mosquitoes in that you could not hear them before they hit and there was an instant itching from the bite. The bites made a swelling about the size of a very small pea. In some places on the coast and on the keys, they were more virulent than in others. At least their bites seemed to be much more annoying. But, he thought, that could be the condition that our hides are in and how much they are burned and toughened. I do not know how the natives stand them. They have to be hardy people to live on this coast and in the Bahamas when the

trades aren't blowing.

He sat in the stern watching and listening. There were two planes, high in the sky, and he listened to the throbbing of the motors until they no longer could be heard.

Big bombers going to Camagüey on the way to Africa or going straight through to somewhere and nothing to do with us. Well, he thought, they are not bothered by sand flies. Neither am I. The hell with them. The hell with them and the hell I'm not. But I'd like to get somedaylight and get out of here. We've checked all the way up to the end of the point, thanks to Willie, and I'll run the little channel right along the edge of the bank. There's only one bad place and with the morning light I can see it OK even in a calm. Then we'll be at Guillermo.

They were underway at daylight and Gil, who had the best eyes, was watching the green shore line with the twelve-power glasses. They were close enough to shore for him to see a cut mangrove branch. Thomas Hudson was steering. Henry was watching out to sea. Willie was backing up Gil.

"They're past this part, anyway," Willie said.

"But we have to check," Ara said. He was backing up Henry.

"Sure," Willie said. "I was just commenting."

"Where's that Dawn Patrol from that damned Molasses ship at Cayo Francés?"

"They don't patrol on Sundays, do they?" Willie asked. "This must be a Sunday."

"There's going to be a breeze," Ara said. "Look at the cirrus."

"I'm afraid of one thing," Thomas Hudson said. "That they've gone in through the pass at Guillermo."

"We'll have to see."

"Let's hook the hell up and get there," Willie said. "This is getting on my nerves."

"That's the impression I get sometimes," Henry said.

Willie looked at him and spat over the side. "Thank you, Henry

," he said. "That's the impression I wished to give."

"Break it up," Thomas Hudson said. "See that big coral head to starboard that's just awash? That's what we have to not hit. On the inside, gentlemen, is Guillermo. See how green she is and full of promise?"

"One more goddamn key," Willie said.

"Can you make out any smoke from charcoal burning?" Thomas Hudson asked.

Gil swept it very carefully and said, "No, Tom."

"The way it rained last night there wouldn't be any smoke," Willie said.

"You're wrong for once, boy," Thomas Hudson said.

"Maybe."

"No. It could rain like hell all night and not put one of those big burnings out. I've seen it rain three days and hardly bother one."

"You know more about them than me," Willie said. "OK, there could be smoke. I hope there is."

"That's a bad shoal," Henry said. "I don't believe they could run in those squalls along here."

In the morning light they could see four terns and two gulls working around the shoal. They had found something and were diving. The terns were crying and the gulls were screaming.

"What are they into, Tom?" Henry asked.

"I don't know. It looks like a school of bait fish that is too deep for them to work."

"Those poor bastard birds have to get up earlier in the morning than we do to make a living," Willie said. "People don't appreciate the work they put in."

"How are you going to run, Tom?" Ara asked.

"Just as close in to the bank as I can and right up to the head of the key."

"Are you going to check that half-moon key with the wreck?"

"I'll make a turn around it close in and everybody glass it. Then

I'll anchor in the bight inside the tip of Guillermo."

"We'll anchor," Willie said.

"That's implied. Why do you get so ornery this early in the morning?"

"I'm not ornery. I'm just admiring the ocean and this beautiful coast Columbus first cast his eyes on. I'm lucky I didn't serve under that Columbus."

"I always thought you did," Thomas Hudson said.

"I read a book about him in the hospital at San Diego," Willie said. "I'm an authority on him and he had a worse fucked-up outfit than this one."

"This isn't a fucked-up outfit."

"No," said Willie. "Not yet."

"OK, Columbus boy. Do you see that wreck that bears about twenty degrees to starboard?"

"That's for your starboard watch to see," Willie said. "But I can see it OK with my one eye that works and there is a booby bird from the Bahamas perched on it. He's probably come to reinforce us."

"Good," said Thomas Hudson. "He's what we need."

"I probably could have been a great ornithologist," Willie said. "Grandma used to raise chickens."

"Tom," Ara said. "Do you think we can work a little closer in? The tide is high now."

"Sure," Thomas Hudson answered. "Ask Antonio to get up in the bow and let me know how much water I have."

"You've got plenty of water, Tom," Antonio called. "Right in to shore. You know this channel."

"I know. I just wanted to be sure."

"Do you want me to take her?"

"Thanks," said Thomas Hudson. "I do not."

"Now we can see the high ground beautifully," Ara said. "You take all of her, Gil. I'll just back you up. Glass her really well."

“Who takes the first quarter of the sea?” Willie asked. “How come you switched on me, anyway?”

“When Tom asked you to look at the wreck. We switch automatically. When you went to starboard I went to port.”

“That’s too nautical for me,” Willie said. “When you want to be nautical, be right or not at all. Why don’t you say right or left the same as in steering?”

“It was you who said the starboard watch,” Henry said.

“That’s right. And from now on I’m going to say downstairs and upstairs and the front and the back of the boat.”

“Willie, get over with Gil and Ara and glass the beach, will you please?” Thomas Hudson said. “The beach and carry it up to the first third of the key.”

“Yes, Tom,” Willie said.

It was easy to see if there was anyone living on Cayo Guillermo on this which was the windward side for nearly all of the year. But there was nothing showing as they moved close in along the coast. They came abeam of the point and Thomas Hudson said, “I’ll circle the half-moon key as close as I can and you all glass it. If you notice anything we can stand by and put the dinghy in.”

The breeze was starting to rise and the sea was beginning to move but it did not break yet on the shoals because of the high tide. Thomas Hudson looked ahead at the small rocky key. He knew there was a sunken wreck at the western end of it but it showed only as a red brown bulge with this high tide. There was a shallow bank and a sandy beach on the inside of this key but he would not see the beach until he had rounded the wreck.

“There’s somebody living on the key,” Ara said. “I see smoke.”

“Right,” said Willie. “It’s on the leeward side and the wind is carrying it to the west.”

“The smoke is about at the center of where the beach should be,” Gil said.

“Can you see a mast?”

“No mast,” Gil said.

“They could step the goddamn mast daytimes,” Willie said.

“Go to your stations,” Thomas Hudson said. “Ara, you stay here with me. Willie, tell Peters to get hooked up to talk whether anybody can hear him or not.”

“What do you think?” Ara asked when the others were gone.

“I think if I were fishing and drying fish that I would have come off here from Guillermo when the calms came and brought the mosquitoes.”

“Me, too.”

“They aren’t burning any charcoal on this key and the smoke is small. So it must be a fresh fire.”

“Unless it is the end of a bigger one.”

“I thought of that.”

“Then we’ll see in five minutes.”

They rounded the wreck, which had another booby bird sitting on it, and Thomas Hudson thought, our allies are checking in fast. Then they were coming up into the lee of the key and Thomas Hudson saw the sand beach, the green behind it, and a shack with smoke coming from it.

“Thank God,” he said.

“Equally,” Ara said. “I was afraid of the other thing, too.”

There was no sign of any boats.

“We’re really close to them, I think. Get in fast with Antonio and tell me what you find. I’ll lay her in right along the bank. Tell them to stay at their stations and act natural.”

The dinghy spun and moved in to the beach. Thomas Hudson watched Antonio and Ara walking toward the thatched shack. They were moving as fast as they could without running. They called to the shack and a woman came out. She was dark as a sea Indian and was barefooted and her long hair hung down almost to her waist. While she talked, another woman came out. She was dark, too, and long-haired and she carried a baby. As soon as she finished

speaking, Ara and Antonio shook hands with the two women and came back to the dinghy. They shoved off and started the motor and came out.

Antonio and Ara came up onto the flying bridge while the dinghy was being hoisted aboard.

"There were two women," Antonio said. "The men are outside fishing. The woman with the baby saw a turtle boat go into the channel that goes inside. It went in when this breeze came up."

"That would be about an hour and a half ago," Thomas Hudson said. "With the tide falling now."

"Very strong," Antonio said. "It is dropping very fast, Tom."

"When she is down, there is not enough water to carry us through there."

"No."

"What do you think?"

"It's your ship."

Thomas Hudson swung the helm hard over and put in both motors up to twenty-seven hundred revolutions and headed for the point of the key.

"They may run aground themselves," he said. "The hell with it."

"We can anchor if it gets too bad," Antonio said. "It's a marl bottom if we run aground. Marl and mud."

"And rocky spots," Thomas Hudson said. "Get Gil up here for me to watch for the stakes. Ara, you and Willie check all the weapons. Stay up here, please, Antonio."

"The channel is a bastard," Antonio said. "But it is not impossible."

"She is impossible in low water. But maybe the other son of a bitch will ground, too, or maybe the wind will fail."

"The wind won't fail, Tom," Antonio said. "It's firm and solid now for the trade wind."

Thomas Hudson looked at the sky and saw the long white hackles of clouds of the east wind. Then he looked ahead at the

point of the main key, at the spot of key and the flats that were beginning to show. There he knew his trouble would start. Then he looked at the mess of keys ahead that showed like green spots on the water.

"Can you pick up the stake yet, Gil?" he asked.

"No, Tom."

"It's probably only the branch of a tree or maybe a stick."

"I can't see anything yet."

"It ought to be dead ahead as we go."

"I see it, Tom. It's a tall stick. Dead ahead as we go."

"Thank you," Thomas Hudson said.

The flats on either side were white yellow in the sun and the tidal stream that came pouring out of the channel was the green water of the inner lagoon. It was not fouled nor cloudy from the marl of the banks because the wind had not had time to raise a sea that would disturb them. This made his piloting easier.

Then he saw how narrow the cut was beyond the stake end and he felt his scalp prickle.

"You can make it, Tom," Antonio said. "Hang close to the starboard bank. I'll see the cut when it opens up."

He hung close to the starboard bank and crawled along. Once he looked to the port bank and saw it was closer than the starboard and he inched over to the right.

"Is she throwing any mud?" he asked.

"Clouds."

They came to the wicked turn and it was not as bad as he thought it would be. The narrow part they had come through was worse. The wind had risen now and Thomas Hudson felt it blowing strongly on his bare shoulder as they ran broadside to it through this cut.

"The stake is dead ahead," Gil said. "It's only a branch of tree."

"I've got it."

"Hold her hard against the starboard bank, Tom," Antonio said.

“We have this one beat.”

Thomas Hudson hugged the starboard bank as though he were parking a car against a curb. It did not look like a curb, though, but like the indented muddy terrain of an old battlefield, when they fought with great concentrations of artillery that had suddenly been revealed from the bottom of the ocean and spread out, like a relief map, on his right.

“How much mud are we throwing?”

“Plenty, Tom. We can anchor when we get through this cut. This side of Contrabando. Or in the lee of Contrabando,” Antonio suggested.

Thomas Hudson turned his head and saw Cayo Contrabando looking small and green and cheerful and he said, “The hell with that. Sweep that key and the channel that shows for a turtle boat, please, Gil. I see the next two stakes.”

This channel was easy. But ahead he could see the sandbar on the right that was beginning to uncover. The closer they came to Cayo Contrabando, the narrower the channel became.

“Hold her to port of that stake,” Antonio said.

“That’s what I’m doing.”

They passed the stake which was only a dead branch. It was brown and blowing in the wind and Thomas Hudson thought that with this wind blowing up they would have much less than the Mean Low Water depths.

“How’s our mud?” he asked Antonio.

“Plenty, Tom.”

“Do you see anything, Gil?’

“Only the stakes.”

The water was beginning to be milky now from the sea that had risen with the wind and it was impossible to see the bottom nor the banks except when the ship sucked them dry.

This is no good, Thomas Hudson thought. But it is no good for them either. And they have to tack in it. They must really be sailors.

Now I have to decide whether they would take the old channel or the new one. That depends on their pilot. If he is young, he would probably take the new one. That is the one the hurricane blew out. If he is old, he will probably take the old channel from habit and because it is safer.

"Antonio," he said. "Do you want to take the old canal or the new one?"

"They're both bad. It doesn't make much difference."

"What would you do?"

"I'd anchor in the lee of Contrabando and wait for the tide."

"We won't get enough tide to make it in daylight."

"That's the problem. You only asked me what I would do."

"I'm going to try to run the son of a bitch."

"It's your ship, Tom. But if we don't catch them, somebody else will."

"But why isn't Cayo Francés flying patrols over all this all the time?"

"They made their patrol this morning. Didn't you see it?"

"No. And why didn't you tell me?"

"I thought you saw it. One of those baby seaplanes."

"Shit," Thomas Hudson said. "It must have been when I was in the head and the generator was running."

"Well, it doesn't make any difference now," Antonio said. "But, Tom, the next two stakes are out."

"Can you see the next two stakes, Gil?"

"I can't see any stakes."

"The hell with it," Thomas Hudson said. "All I have to do is hug that next chickenshit little key and keep off the sand-spit that runs north and south of it. Then we'll case that bigger key with the mangroves and then we'll try for the old or the new channel."

"The east wind is blowing all the water out."

"The hell with the east wind," Thomas Hudson said. As he said the words, they sounded like a basic and older blasphemy than any

that could have to do with the Christian religion. He knew that he was speaking against one of the great friends of all people who go to sea. So since he had made the blasphemy he did not apologize. He repeated it.

"You don't mean that, Tom," Antonio said.

"I know it," Thomas Hudson said. Then he said to himself, making an act of contrition and remembering the verse unexactly, "Blow, blow, thou western wind. That the small rain down may rain. Christ, that my love were in my arms and I in my bed again." It's the same goddamn wind only with the difference in latitude, he thought. They come from different continents. But they are both loyal and friendly and good. Then he repeated to himself again, Christ, that my love were in my arms and I in my bed again.

The water was so muddy now that there was nothing to steer by except the ranges and the suction the ship made of water from the banks. George was in the bow with the lead and Ara had a long pole. They measured their depths and called back to the bridge.

Thomas Hudson had the feeling that this had happened before in a bad dream. They had run many difficult channels. But this was another thing that had happened sometime in his life. Perhaps it had happened all his life. But now it was happening with such an intensification that he felt both in command and at the same time the prisoner of it.

"Can you make out anything, Gil?" he asked.

"Nothing."

"Do you want Willie up here?"

"No. I see whatever Willie would see."

"I think he ought to be up anyway."

"As you wish, Tom."

Ten minutes later they were aground.

XV

They were aground on a patch of mud and sandy bottom that should have been marked with a stake, and the tide was still falling. The wind was blowing hard and the water was muddy. Ahead was a medium-sized green key that looked set low in the water and there was a scattering of very small keys to the left. To the left and the right there were patches of bare bank that were beginning to show as the water receded. Thomas Hudson watched flocks of shore birds wheeling and settling on the banks to feed.

Antonio had the dinghy over and he and Ara ran out a bow anchor and two light stern anchors.

"Do you think we need another bow anchor?" Thomas Hudson asked Antonio.

"No, Tom. I don't think so."

"If the wind rises it can push us against the flood when it comes."

"I don't think it will, Tom. But it could."

"Let's get a small one out to windward and shift the big one further to leeward. Then we don't have anything to worry about."

"All right," Antonio said. "I'd rather do that than run aground again in a bad place."

"Yeah," Thomas Hudson said. "We went into all that before."

"It's still the right thing to anchor."

"I know it. I just asked you to put out another small one and shift the big one."

"Yes, Tom," Antonio said.

"Ara likes to lift anchors."

“Nobody likes to lift anchors.”

“Ara.”

Antonio smiled and said, “Maybe. Anyway I agree with you.”

“We always agree sooner or later.”

“But we mustn’t let it be when it is too late.”

Thomas Hudson watched the maneuver and looked ahead at the green key that was showing dark now at the roots of the mangroves as the tide fell. They could be in the bight on the south side of that key, he thought. This wind is going to blow until two or three o’clock in the morning and they could try to break out and run either of the channels in daylight when the flood starts. Then they could run that big lake of a bay where there is nothing to worry about all night. They have lights and a good channel to get out with at the far end. It all depends on the wind.

Ever since they had grounded he had felt, in a way, reprieved. When they had grounded he had felt the heavy bump of the ship as though he were hit himself. He knew it was not rocky as she hit. He could feel that in his hands and through the soles of his feet. But the grounding had come to him as a personal wound. Then, later, had come the feeling of reprieve that a wound brings. He still had the feeling of the bad dream and that it all had happened before. But it had not happened in this way and now, grounded, he had the temporary reprieve. He knew that it was only a reprieve but he relaxed in it.

Ara came up on the bridge and said, “It’s good holding-ground, Tom. We have them in there good with a trip line to the big one. When we raise the big one we can get out fast. We buoyed both the stern anchors with trip lines.”

“I saw. Thank you.”

“Don’t feel bad, Tom. The sons of bitches may be just behind that other key.”

“I don’t feel bad. I just feel delayed.”

“It’s not like smashing up a car or losing a ship. We’re just

aground waiting for a tide."

"I know."

"Both wheels are sound. She's just in mud up to her ass."

"I know. I put her there."

"She'll come off as easy as she went in."

"Sure she will."

"Tom. Are you worried about anything?"

"What would I be worried about?"

"Nothing. I only worried if you were worried."

"The hell with worry," Thomas Hudson said. "You and Gil go down. See everybody eats well and is cheerful. Afterwards we'll go in and check that key. That's all there is to do."

"Willie and I can go now. We don't have to eat."

"No. I'm going in later with Willie and Peters."

"Not me?"

"No. Peters speaks German. Don't tell him he's going in. Just wake him up and see he drinks plenty of coffee."

"Why can't I go, too?"

"The dinghy is too damn small."

Gil left him the big glasses and went down with Ara. Thomas Hudson studied the key carefully with the big glasses and saw that the mangroves were too high for him to learn anything about what was inside. There were other trees mixed with the mangroves on the solid part of the key and they brought the height up even more so that he could not possibly see if there was any mast showing in the horseshoe-shaped shelter on the far side. The big glasses hurt his eyes and he put them in their case and hung the strap of the case on a hook and laid the glasses flat on the frag rack.

He was happy to be alone again on the flying bridge and he relaxed for the short time of his reprieve. He watched the shore birds working on the flats and he remembered what they had meant to him when he was a boy. He could not feel the same about them now and he had no wish to kill them ever. But he remembered the

early days with his father in a blind on some sand-spit with tin decoys out and how they would come in as the tide lowered and bared the flats and how he would whistle the flock in as they were circling. It was a sad whistle and he made it now and turned one flock. But they veered off from the stranded ship and went far out to feed.

He swept the horizon with the big glasses once and there was no sign of any boat. Maybe they have made it out through the new channel and into the inside passage, he thought. It would be nice if someone else caught them. We can't catch them now without a fight. They will not surrender to a dinghy.

He had been thinking so long in their heads that he was tired of it. I am really tired finally, he thought. Well, I know what I have to do, so it is simple. Duty is a wonderful thing. I do not know what I would have done without duty since young Tom died. You could have painted, he told himself. Or you could have done something useful. Maybe, he thought. Duty is simpler.

This is useful, he thought. Do not think against it. It helps to get it over with. That's all we are working for. Christ knows what there is beyond that. We've chased these characters quite well and now take a ten-minute break and then proceed with your duty. The hell with quite well, he thought. We've chased them very well.

"Don't you want to eat, Tom?" Ara called up.

"I don't feel hungry, kid," Thomas Hudson said. "I'll take the bottle of cold tea that's on the ice."

Ara handed it up and Thomas Hudson took it and relaxed against the corner of the flying bridge. He drank from the bottle of cold tea and watched the biggest key that was ahead. The mangrove roots were showing plainly now and the key looked as though it were on stilts. Then he saw a flight of flamingoes coming from the left. They were flying low over the water, lovely to see in the sunlight. Their long necks were slanted down and their incongruous legs were straight out; immobile while their pink and black wings

beat, carrying them toward the mud bank that was ahead and to the right. Thomas Hudson watched them and marvelled at their downswept black and white bills and the rose color they made in the sky, which made their strange individual structures unimportant and still each one was an excitement to him. Then as they came up on the green key he saw them all swing sharply to the right instead of crossing the key.

"Ara," he called down.

Ara came up and said, "Yes, Tom."

"Check out three *niños* with six clips apiece and put them in the boat with a dozen frags and the middle size aid kit. Send Willie up here, please."

The flamingoes had settled on the bank to the far right and were feeding busily. Thomas Hudson was watching them when Willie said, "Look at those goddamn fillamingoes."

"They spooked flying over the key. I'm pretty sure that boat or another boat is inside there. Do you want to go in with me, Willie?"

"Of course."

"Did you finish chow?"

"The condemned man ate a hearty lunch."

"Help Ara, then."

"Is Ara going with us?"

"I'm taking Peters because he speaks German."

"Can't we take Ara instead? I don't want to be with Peters in a fight."

"Peters may be able to talk us out of a fight. Listen, Willie. I want prisoners and I don't want their pilot to get killed."

"You're making a lot of conditions, Tom, with them eight or nine maybe and we three. Who the hell knows we know they have the pilot anyway?"

"We know."

"Let's not be so fucking noble."

"I asked you if you wanted to come."

“I’m coming,” Willie said. “Only that Peters.”

“Peters will fight. Send Antonio and Henry up, will you, please.”

“Do you think they are in there, Tom?” Antonio asked.

“I’m pretty sure.”

“Can’t I go in with you, Tom?” Henry asked.

“No. She will only take three. If anything happens to us, try and nail her with the .50’s if she tries to come out on the first of the tide. Afterwards you’ll find her in the long bay. She’ll be damaged. She probably won’t even be able to make it out. Get a prisoner if you can and get into Cayo Francés and check in.”

“Couldn’t I go in instead of Peters?” Henry asked.

“No, Henry. I’m sorry. But he speaks German. You have a good crew,” Thomas Hudson said to Antonio. “If everything goes well with us I’ll leave Willie and Peters on board with whatever there is and bring a prisoner back in the dinghy.”

“Our last prisoner didn’t last very long.”

“I’ll try and bring a good, strong, healthy one. Go on down and see everything is secured. I want to watch the flamingoes for a little while.”

He stood on the flying bridge and watched the flamingoes. It is not just their color, he thought. It’s not just the black on that rose pink. It is their size and that they are ugly in detail and yet perversely beautiful. They must be a very old bird from the earliest times.

He did not watch them through the glasses because he did not want details now. He wanted the roseate mass on the gray brown flat. Two other flocks had come in now and the banks were colored in a way that he would not have dared to paint. Or I would have dared to paint and would have painted, he thought. It is nice to see flamingoes before you make this trip. I better not give them time to worry or to think too much.

He climbed down from the bridge and said, “Gil, get up there and keep your glasses on the key. Henry, if you hear a lot of noise

and then the turtle boat should come out from behind the key, shoot her fucking bow off. Everybody get up and glass where the survivors are and you can hunt them tomorrow. Plug the dinghy where she is shot up and use her. The turtle boat has a skiff and you can plug her up and use her too if we don't damage her too badly."

Antonio said, "Do you have any other orders?"

"Just keep your bowels open and try to lead clean lives. We'll be back in a little while. Come on, you two gentlemen bastards. Let's go."

"Grandmother always claimed I wasn't a bastard," Peters said. "She said I was the nicest-looking, most legitimate little baby in the county."

"Mother claimed I wasn't a bastard, too," Willie said.

"Where do you want us, Tom?"

"She trims best with you in the bow. But I'll take the bow if you like."

"Get in and steer her," Willie said. "You got a really good ship now."

"I got my finger on my number," Thomas Hudson said. "I'm working up. Come aboard, Mr. Peters."

"Happy to be on board, admiral," Peters said.

"Good hunting," Henry said.

"Drop dead," Willie called. The motor caught and they were off toward the silhouette of the key that was lower in the water now because of their lack of altitude.

"I'm going alongside and we'll board her without hailing." The two men nodded, one amidships and one in the bow. "Get your junk hung. I don't give a shit if it shows," Thomas Hudson said.

"I don't know where I'd hide it," Peters said. "I feel like one of grandma's mules now."

"Then be a mule. It's a fucking good animal."

"Tom, do I have to remember all that shit about the pilot?"

"Remember it but use your head."

“Well,” said Peters. “We haven’t any fucking troubles anymore.”

“We better all pipe down,” Thomas Hudson said. “We’ll all three board at the same time and if they are below, you ask them in Kraut to come out with their hands up. We have to stop talking because they can hear voices a long way above the noise of an outboard.”

“What do we do if they don’t come out?”

“Willie throws in a grenade.”

“What do we do it they’re on deck?”

“Sweep the deck according to our sectors. Me the stern. Peters amidships. You the bow.”

“Then do I throw in a grenade?”

“Sure. We ought to get woundeds that we can save. That’s why I brought the kit.”

“I thought that was for us.”

“Us too. Now let’s pipe down. Do you have it clear?”

“Clearer than shit,” Willie said.

“Has there been an issue of ass hole corks?” Peters asked. “They dropped it from the plane this morning. Didn’t you get yours?”

“No. But grandma always said I had the slowest digestion of any baby in the whole of the South. They got one of my diapers in the Smithsonian Institute of the Confederacy.”

“Cut out the shit,” Willie said, leaning back in order not to talk loudly. “Are we doing all this in daylight, Tom?”

“Now.”

“I’ll be a sad son of a bitch,” said Willie. “I have fallen among thieves and bastards.”

“Shut up, Willie, and let’s see you fight.”

Willie nodded his head and looked ahead with his good eye toward the green mangrove key which lay tiptoed on its brown red roots.

He only said one more thing before they rounded the point, “They’ve got good oysters on those roots.”

Thomas Hudson nodded.

XVI

They saw the turtle boat when they rounded the point of the key and passed through the channel which separated it from another small key. She was lying with her bow close in to shore and there were vines hanging from her mast and her deck was covered with new-cut mangrove branches.

Willie leaned back and with his voice almost against Peters' ear, said in a low voice, "Her skiff's missing. Pass the word."

Peters leaned his blotched, freckled face back and said, "Her skiff's missing, Tom. There must be some ashore."

"We'll board her and sink her," Thomas Hudson said. "Same plan. Pass the word."

Peters bent forward and spoke into Willie's ear and Willie's head started to shake. Then he held up his hand with the familiar zero. Zero as in asshole, Thomas Hudson thought. They came up on her as fast as the little coffee mill of an engine would take them and Thomas Hudson put her smartly alongside without bumping. Willie lifted the grapple over the gunwale of the turtle boat and pulled it fast and the three of them were on the deck almost at the same time. Underneath their feet there were mangrove branches with their dead fresh smell and Thomas Hudson saw the vine draped mast as though now it were a dream again_ He saw the hatch open and a forward hatch open and covered with branches. There was no one on deck.

Thomas Hudson waved Willie forward past this hatch and covered the other one with his submachine gun. He checked that the safety lever was on full automatic. Under his bare feet he could

feel the hard roundness of the branches, the slipperiness of the leaves, and the heat of the wooden deck.

"Tell them to come out with their hands up," he said quietly to Peters.

Peters spoke in rough, throaty German. Nobody answered and nothing happened.

Thomas Hudson thought, grandma's boy has a good delivery, and he said, "Tell them again we give them ten seconds to come out. We will treat them as prisoners of war. Then count ten."

Peters spoke so it sounded like the voice of all German doom. His voice holds up magnificently, Thomas Hudson thought, and turned his head fast to see if the skiff were in sight. He could only see the brown roots and the green of the mangroves.

"Count ten and put one in," he said. "Watch that fucking forward hatch, Willie."

"It's got those fucking branches covering it."

"Push one in with your hands when Peters goes. Don't throw it. "

Peters reached ten and standing there, tall, loose-jointed like a pitcher on the mound, holding his submachine gun under his left arm, he pulled the pin of the grenade with his teeth, held it spurting smoke a moment as though he were warming it, and tossed it with the underhand motion of a Carl Mays into the darkness of the hatch.

As Thomas Hudson watched him, he thought, he's a great actor and he doesn't think there is anything down there.

Thomas Hudson hit the deck, covering the mouth of the hatch with his Thompson. Peters' grenade exploded with a flashing crack and a roar and Thomas Hudson saw Willie opening the brush to drop a grenade in the forward hatch. Then to the right of the mast, where the vines hung, he saw the muzzle of a gun come up from between the branches on the same hatch where Willie was working. He fired at it but it fired five quick flashes, clattering like a child's

rattle. Then Willie's grenade went with a big flash and Thomas Hudson looked and saw Willie, in the scuppers, pull the pin on another grenade to throw in. Peters was on his side with his head on the gunwale. Blood was running from his head into the scuppers.

Willie threw and the grenade had a different sound because it rolled further into the boat before it burst.

"Do you think there are any more of the cocksuckers?" Willie called.

"I'll put one more in from here," Thomas Hudson said. He ducked and ran to get out of any fire from the big hatch and pulled the pin on another grenade, gray, heavy, solid, and notched in the grip of his hand, and crossing forward of the hatch he rolled it down into the stern. There was the crack, boom, and smoke where pieces of the deck came up.

Willie was looking at Peters and Tom came over and looked at him too. He did not look very different than usual.

"Well, we've lost our interpreter," Willie said. His good eye was twitching but his voice was the same.

"She's settling fast," Thomas Hudson said.

"She was aground already. But she's going over on her beam ends now."

"We've got a lot of uncompleted business, Willie."

"And we traded even. One for one. But we sunk the damned boat."

"You better get the hell back to the ship and get back here with Ara and Henry. Tell Antonio to bring her abreast of the point as soon as he gets the tide."

"I have to check below first."

"I'll check."

"No," Willie said. "That's my trade."

"How do you feel, kid?"

"Fine. Only sorry to hear of the loss of Mr. Peters. I'll get a rag or something to put over his face. We ought to straighten him out

with his head uphill now she's careening like this."

"How is the Kraut in the bow?"

"He's a mess."

XVII

Willie was gone now to bring Ara and Henry. Thomas Hudson lay behind the parapet the high gunwale of the turtle boat made. His feet were against the hatch and he was watching for the skiff. Peters lay feet downward on the other side of the hatch and his face was covered by a German navy fatigue shirt. I never realized he was so tall, Thomas Hudson thought.

He and Willie had both searched the turtle boat and it was a mess. There had only been one German on board. He was the one who had shot Peters and he had evidently taken him for the officer. There was one other Schmeisser machine pistol aboard and close to two thousand rounds of ammunition in a metal case which had been opened with pliers or a can opener. Presumably, the men who had gone ashore had been armed because there were no weapons on board. The skiff was at least a sixteen-foot, heavy turtler from the chocks and the marks that she had left on the deck. They still had a quantity of food. It was mostly dried fish and hard roasted pork. It was the wounded man who had been left on board who had shot Peters. He had a bad thigh wound that was nearly healed and another nearly healed wound in the fleshy part of his left shoulder. They had good charts of the coast and of the West Indies and there was one carton of Camels without stamps and marked Ships Supplies. They had no coffee, nor tea, nor any liquors of any sort.

The problem now was what they would do. Where were they? They must have seen or heard the small fight on the turtle boat and they might return to pick up their stores. They would have seen one man leave by himself in the dinghy with the outboard and from the

shots and the explosion of the frags there could easily be three men dead or incapacitated aboard. They would come back for stores or anything else that might be hidden and then break for the mainland in the dark. They could shove the skiff off anything that she might ground on.

The skiff must be a sturdy craft. Thomas Hudson had no radio operator and it was therefore impossible to give a description of the skiff and nobody would be looking for her. Then, if they wanted to, and had the will to try it they could try to assault the ship at night. That seemed extremely unlikely.

Thomas Hudson thought it out as carefully as he could. Finally, he decided, I believe that they will go inside the mangroves and haul the skiff in and hide it. If we go in after them, they can ambush us easily. Then they will run for the open inside bay and push on and try and pass Cayo Francés at night. That is easy. They may pick up supplies, or raid for them, and they will keep on pushing to the westward and try to make one of the German outfits around Havana where they will hide them and pick them up. They can easily get a better boat.

They can jump one. Or steal one. I have to report at Cayo Francés and deliver Peters and get my orders. The trouble won't come until Havana. There's a lieutenant commanding at Cayo Francés and we won't have any trouble there and they can keep Peters.

I have enough ice to handle him to there and I gas there and get ice at Caibarién.

We are going to get these characters for better or for worse. But I am not going to put Willie and Ara and Henry into one of those burp-gun massacres in the mangroves for fuck-all nothing. There are eight of them, anyway, from the looks of everything on board. I had a chance to catch them today with their pants down and I blew it because they were too smart or too lucky and they are always efficient.

We've lost one man and he is our radio operator. But we have cut them down to a skiff now. If I see the skiff we will destroy it and blockade the island and hunt them down on it. But I'm not going to stick our necks into any of those eight against three traps. If it is my ass afterwards, it is my ass. It is going to be my ass, anyway. Now that I've lost Peters. If I lost any irregulars, nobody would give a damn. Except me and the ship.

I wish they would get back, he thought. I don't want those bastards coming out to see what gives aboard this vessel and have the battle of no-name key by myself. I wonder what they are doing in there, anyway? Maybe they went for oysters. Willie mentioned the oysters. Maybe they just didn't want to be on this turtle boat in daylight if a plane came over and spotted her. But they must know the hours those planes work on by now. Hell, I wish they would come out and get it over with. I've got good cover and they'd have to get in range before they try to come aboard. Why do you suppose that wounded man didn't open up on us when we came over the side? He must have heard the outboard. Maybe he was asleep. The outboard makes very little noise anyway.

There are too many whys in this business, he thought, and I am not at all sure I have it figured properly. Maybe I should not have jumped the boat. But I think I had to do that. We sunk the boat and lost Peters and killed one man. That is not very brilliant but it still adds up.

He heard the hum of the outboard and turned his head. He saw her coming around the point but he could only see one man in her. It was Ara in the stern. But he noticed she was loaded deep and he realized that Willie and Henry must be lying flat. Willie's really smart, he thought. Now the people on the key don't know but that there may be only one man in the dinghy and they will see it is a different man from the one that took her away. I don't know whether that is smart or not. But Willie must have figured it.

The dinghy came up in the lee of the turtle boat and Thomas

Hudson saw Ara's great chest, his long arms, and his brown face that was serious now, and he could see the nervous twitching of his legs. Henry and Willie lay flat with their heads on their arms.

When the dinghy came into the lee of the turtle boat that was careened away from the key and Ara held the rail. Willie turned on his side and said, "Get aboard, Henry, and crawl up there with Tom. Ara will hand you your junk. You've got Peters' junk too."

Henry climbed cautiously up the steep deck on his belly. He took one look at Peters as he crawled by him.

"Hi, Tom," he said.

Thomas Hudson put his hand on Henry's arm and said softly, "Get up in the bow and keep absolutely flat. Don't let anything show over the gunwale."

"Yes, Tom," the big man said, and began inching down to crawl up to the bow. He had to crawl over Peters' legs and he picked up his submachine gun and clips and stuck the clips in his belt. He felt in Peters' pockets for frags and hung them on his belt. He patted Peters on the legs and holding the two submachine guns by the muzzles he crawled up to his post in the bow.

Thomas Hudson saw him look down into the blasted forward hatch as he crawled up the steep deck over the broken mangroves. His face gave no sign of what he saw there. When he was under the lee of the gunwale, he put the two submachine guns by his right hand and then tested the functioning of Peters' gun and put in a fresh clip. He laid the other clips along the gunwale and unhooked the grenades from his belt and laid them out within reach. When he saw him in position and looking out at the greenness of the key, Thomas Hudson turned his head and spoke to Willie who was lying in the bottom of the dinghy with his good and his bad eye shut against the sun. He was wearing a faded khaki shirt with sleeves and ragged shorts and he had a pair of sneakers on. Ara was sitting in the stern and Thomas Hudson noticed his thatch of black hair and the way his big hands gripped the gunwale. His legs were still

jumping but Thomas Hudson had known for a long time how nervous he always was before action and how beautiful he was once things started.

"Willie," Thomas Hudson said. "You have anything figured?"

Willie opened his good eye and kept his bad eye closed against the sun.

"I ask permission to go in on the far side of the key and see what the hell gives. We can't let them get out of here."

"I'll go in with you."

"No, Tommy. I know this shit and it's my trade."

"I don't want you to go in alone."

"That's the only way on this. You trust me, Tommy. Ara will come back here and back up your play if I flush them. He can come in and pick me up on the beach if there isn't any trouble."

He had both eyes open and he was looking hard at Thomas Hudson the way a man looks who is trying to sell an appliance to someone who should really have it if they can afford it.

"I'd rather go in with you."

"Too fucking much noise, Tom. I tell you truly I know this shit good. I'm a fucking expert. You'll never find anybody like me."

"OK. Go in," Thomas Hudson said. "But bust up their skiff."

"What the hell you think I'm going to do? Go in there and jerk off?"

"If you're going in, you better get in."

"Tom. Now you've got two traps set. The ship and here. Ara makes you mobile. You have one expendable, medically discharged Marine to lose. What's holding you up?"

"You talking so much," Thomas Hudson said. "Get the hell in and shit bless you."

"Drop dead," Willie told him.

"You sound in good shape," Thomas Hudson said and explained rapidly in Spanish to Ara what they were going to do.

"Don't bother," Willie said. "I can talk to him lying down."

Ara said, “I’ll be right back, Tom.”

Thomas Hudson watched him yank the motor alive and watched the dinghy move out with Ara’s broad back and black head in the stern and Willie lying in the bottom. He had turned around so that his head was close to Ara’s feet and he could talk to him.

The good, brave, worthless son of a bitch, Thomas Hudson thought. Old Willie. He made up my mind for me when I was starting to put things off. I would rather have a good Marine, even a ruined Marine, than anything in the world when there are chips down. And we have chips down now. Good luck, Mr. Willie, he thought. And don’t drop dead.

“How are you, Henry?” he asked softly.

“Fine, Tom. It was very gallant of Willie to go in, don’t you think?”

“He never even heard of the word,” Thomas Hudson said.

“He just conceived it to be his duty.”

“I’m sorry we haven’t been friends.”

“Everybody is friends when things are bad enough.”

“I’m going to be friends from now on.”

“We’re all going to do a lot of things from now on,” Thomas Hudson said. “I wish from now on would start.”

XVIII

They were lying on the hot deck watching the line of the key. The sun was strong on their backs but the wind cooled them. Their backs were nearly as brown as the sea Indian women they had seen this morning on the outer key. That seemed as long ago as all his life, Thomas Hudson thought. That and the open sea and the long breaking reefs and the dark depth less tropic sea beyond were as far away as all of his life was now. We could have just gone up the open sea with this breeze and made Cayo Francés and Peters would have answered their blinker and we all would have had cold beer tonight. Don't think about it, boy, he thought. This is what you had to do.

"Henry," he said. "How are you doing?"

"Splendidly, Tom," Henry said very softly. "A frag couldn't blow up from getting too hot in the sun could it?"

"I've never seen it. But it can increase their potency."

"I hope Ara's got some water," Henry said.

"Don't you remember them putting it in?"

"No, Tom. I was looking after my own equipment and I didn't notice."

Then against the wind they heard the noise of the outboard on the dinghy. Thomas Hudson turned his head carefully and saw her round the point. The dinghy was riding high and Ara was in the stern. He could see the width of his shoulders and his black head at this distance. Thomas Hudson turned his head again to watch the key and he saw a night heron rise from the trees in the center and flyaway. Then he saw two wood ibis rise and wheel and fly off with

quick-flapping, then coasting, then quick-flapping wing beats downwind toward the little key.

Henry had watched them, too, and he said, “Willie must be getting pretty well in.”

“Yes,” Thomas Hudson said. “They came off the high ridge in the center of the key.”

“Then nobody else was there.”

“Not if it was Willie who scared them.”

“That’s about where Willie would be by now if he didn’t have too bad going.”

“Keep down low now when Ara comes.”

Ara brought the dinghy along the careened lee of the turtle boat and put the grapnel aboard against the gunwale. He climbed carefully aboard with the ease of a bear. He had a water bottle and a bottle of tea in an old gin bottle each tied to a piece of heavy fishing line that suspended them over his neck. He crawled up to lie beside Thomas Hudson.

“What about some of the damn water?” Henry asked.

Ara laid his stuff down beside Thomas Hudson’s, untied the water bottle from the fish line and crawled carefully along the slanted deck above the two hatches to where Henry was stationed.

“Drink it,” he said. “Don’t try to bathe with it.”

He slapped Henry on the back and crawled back to lie beside Thomas Hudson.

“Tom,” he said, speaking very low. “We saw nothing. I landed Willie on the far side almost directly opposite us and went out to the ship. There I went aboard on the lee side away from the key. I explained everything to Antonio and he understood well. Then I filled the outboard with gas and filled the reserve can and brought out the iced tea and the water.”

“Good,” said Thomas Hudson. He dropped down the deck a little way and took a long pull at the bottle of iced tea.

“Thank you very much for the tea.”

“It was Antonio thought of it. We forgot certain things in our hurry at the start.”

“Move down toward the stern so you can cover it.”

“Yes, Tom,” Ara said.

They lay there in the sun and the wind and each one watched the key. Occasionally a bird, or a pair of birds would fly up, and they knew these birds had been frightened either by Willie or by the others.

“The birds must make Willie angry,” Ara said. “He didn’t think about that when he went in.”

“He might just as well be sending up balloons,” Thomas Hudson answered.

He was thinking and he turned to look over his shoulder. He did not like any of it now. There were too many birds getting up from the key. And what reason now had they to believe that the others were in there now? Why would they have gone in there in the first place? Lying on the deck he had a hollow feeling in his chest that both he and Willie had been deceived. Maybe they haven’t sucked us in. But it does not look good with so many birds getting up, he thought. Another pair of wood ibis rose not far from the shore and Thomas Hudson turned to Henry and said, “Get down in the forward hatch, Henry, please, and keep watch inland.”

“It’s awfully messy in there.”

“I know.”

“All right, Tom.”

“Leave your frags and clips. Just take a frag in your pocket and the *niño.”*

Henry eased himself down into the hatch and looked out toward the inside keys that masked the channel. His expression had not changed. But he was tight-lipped keeping it in order. “I’m sorry about it, Henry,” Thomas Hudson said to him.

“It’s just the way it has to be for a while.”

“I don’t mind it,” Henry said. Then the studied severity of his

face cracked and he smiled his wonderful good smile. “It’s that it isn’t exactly the way I would plan to spend a summer.”

“Me either. But things don’t look so open and shut right now.”

A bittern came out from the mangroves and Thomas Hudson heard it squawk and watched its nervous swooping flight downwind. Then he settled down to trace Willie’s progress along the mangroves by the rising and the flight of the birds. When the birds stopped rising he was sure he was headed back. Then after a time they were being put up again and he knew Willie was working out the windward curve of the key. After three-quarters of an hour he saw a great white heron rise in panic and start its slow heavy wing-beats to windward and he said to Ara, “He’ll be out now. Better go down to the point and pick him up.”

“I see him,” Ara said in a moment. “He just waved. He’s lying down just in from the beach.”

“Go get him and bring him back lying down.”

Ara slid back down to the dinghy with his weapon and with a couple of frags in his pockets. He got into the stern of the dinghy and cast her off.

“Toss me the tea bottle, will you, Tom?”

Ara caught it using both hands for surety instead of the one-hand catch he would usually have made. He enjoyed catching frags one-handed and the hardest way possible just as he enjoyed crimping detonator caps with his teeth. But this tea was for Willie and he appreciated what Willie had been through, even though there were no results and he placed the bottle carefully under the stern and hoped it was still cool.

“What do you think, Tom?” Henry asked.

“We’re fucked. For the moment.”

In a little while the dinghy was alongside and Willie was lying in the bottom with the bottle of tea in both hands. His hands and face were scratched and bloody, although he had washed them with sea water, and one sleeve was torn off his shirt. His face was bulging

with mosquito bites and there were lumps from mosquito bites wherever his flesh was bare.

"There's not a goddamn thing, Tom," he said. "They never were on that key. You and I weren't too damned smart."

"No."

"What do you think?"

"They went inside after they grounded. Whether for keeps or to make a recon of the channels I don't know."

"Do you think they saw us board?"

"They could have seen everything or nothing. They're pretty low in the water to see."

"They ought to have heard it downwind."

"They should have."

"So now?"

"You get out to the ship and send Ara back for Henry and me. They might still be back."

"What about Peters? We can take him."

"Take him now."

"Tommy, you're parapeted up on the wrong side," Willie said. "We've both been wrong and I'm not offering any advice."

"I know it. I'm going down in the afterhatch as soon as Ara loads Peters."

"He better load him by himself," Willie said. "They could see silhouettes. But they couldn't make out an object flat on the deck without glasses."

Thomas Hudson explained to Ara and Ara climbed up and handled Peters quite easily and impersonally but he knotted the cloth behind his head. He was neither tender nor rough and all he said as he lifted him and slid him head first into the dinghy was, "He is very rigid."

"That's why they call them stiffs," Willie said. "Didn't you ever hear?"

"Yes," Ara said. "We call them *fiambres* which means cold meats

as in a restaurant when you can have fish or cold meats. But I was thinking of Peters. He was always so limber."

"I'll get him right back, Tom. Do you need anything?"

"Luck," Thomas Hudson said. "Thank you for the recon, Willie."

"Just the usual shit," Willie said.

"Have Gil put Merthiolate on the scratches."

"Fuck the scratches," Willie said. "I'm going to run as a jungle man."

Thomas Hudson and Henry were looking out from the two hatches toward the broken and indented line of keys that lay between them and the long bay that formed the inland channel. They spoke in a normal tone of voice since they knew the others could not be closer than those small green islands.

"You watch," Thomas Hudson said. "I'm going to throw that ammunition of theirs overboard and have another look around below."

Below he found several things he had not noticed before and he lifted the case of ammunition out onto the deck and pushed it over the side. I suppose I should have scattered all the cartons, he thought. But the hell with it. He brought up the Schmeisser pistol and found it was not functioning. He laid it down with his own stuff.

I'll let Ara break it down, he thought. At least we know why they did not take it with them. Do you suppose they left that wounded man behind just as a reception committee and pulled out? Or do you suppose they made him comfortable and went off for a recon? How much do you think they saw and how much do they know?

"Don't you think we might have kept that ammo for evidence?" Henry asked.

"We're way past the evidence stage now."

"But it's always good to have it. You know how stuffy they are and they'll probably just evaluate the whole thing as doubtful.

Maybe ONI won't even give it a doubtful. Do you remember the last one, Tom?"

"Yes, I remember."

"She went all the way up the mouth of the Mississippi and she's still doubtful."

"That's correct."

"I think we might have kept the ammo."

"Henry," Thomas Hudson said. "Please take it easy. The deads from the massacre are on the key. We have Schmeisser bullets from them and from the dead Kraut. We have another dead Kraut buried with the location in the log. We have this turtle boat sunk and a dead Kraut in her bows. We have two Schmeisser pistols. One is nonfunctioning and the other is smashed by the frag."

"A hurricane will come along and blow everything away and they will say the whole thing is doubtful."

"All right," said Thomas Hudson. "Let's concede the whole thing is doubtful. And Peters?"

"One of us probably shot him."

"Sure. We'll have to go through all that."

They heard the outboard and then saw Ara round the point.

That dinghy rides as high in the bow as a canoe, Thomas Hudson thought.

"Get your junk together, Henry," he said. "We're going back to the ship."

"I'm glad to stay aboard this thing if you want me to."

"No. I want you on the ship."

After Ara came alongside Thomas Hudson changed his mind.

"Stay here, Henry, a little while and I'll send Ara for you. If they come out, get a frag into the skiff if they come alongside. Take this back hatch where you have lots of room. Use your head."

"Yes, Tom. Thank you for letting me stay."

"I'd stay and send you in. But I have to talk things over with Antonio."

“I understand. Shouldn’t I fire on them when they are alongside before I throw the frag?”

“If you want. But keep your head down and then throw the frag in from the other hatch. And hold it all you can.”

He was lying in the lee scuppers passing his things to Ara. Then he lowered himself over the side.

“Is there too much water for you down there?” he asked Henry.

“No, Tom. It’s quite all right.”

“Don’t get claustrophobia and keep a good lookout. If they come in, let them get right alongside before you make your play.”

“Of course, Tom.”

“Think of it as a duck blind.”

“I don’t have to, Tom.”

Thomas Hudson was lying flat on the planking of the dinghy now.

“Ara will be back as soon as you ought to come in.”

“Don’t worry, Tom. I can stay here all night if you like but I’d like Ara to bring out something to eat and a little rum perhaps and some more water.”

“He’ll be back and pick you up and we’ll have a little rum on board.”

Ara pulled the cord on the motor and they headed for the ship. Thomas Hudson felt the frags along his legs and the weight of the *niño* across his chest. He put his arms around it and cuddled it and Ara laughed and leaned down and said, “This is a bad life for good children.”

XIX

They were all on board the ship now and it was cool in late afternoon wind. The flamingoes were gone from the flat although it was still uncovered. The flat was gray in the afternoon light and there was a flock of willets working over it. Beyond was the shallow water, the channels that could not be seen for the mud, and in the background were the keys.

Thomas Hudson was standing now on the flying bridge, leaning against a corner of it, and Antonio was talking to him.

"We don't get a high tide until after eleven tonight," Antonio said. "This wind is emptying the water right out of the bay and the flats and I don't know what sort of depths we will have."

"Will it float her or will we have to kedge off?"

"It will float her. But we haven't any moon."

"That's right. That's why we have these big springs."

"She only made last night," Antonio said. "She's new. We didn't see her last night because of the squall."

"That's right."

"I sent George and Gil in to cut some brush to stake the channel so we can get out. We can always sound it with the dinghy and get stakes on the points."

"Look. What I'd like to do when she floats is get in to where I can bring the searchlight and the .50's to bear on the turtle boat and put somebody on board to blink to us if they come out in the skiff."

"That would be ideal, Tom. But you can't get in there in the dark. You could get in there with the searchlight and the dinghy

sounding ahead of you and calling the soundings and staking. But nobody would come out then. They'd never come out."

"I guess so. I've been wrong twice today."

"You were wrong," Antonio said. "But it was just chances. Like drawing a card."

"What's important is that I was wrong. Now tell me what you think."

"I think that if they haven't gone and if we make no move to act as though we were not aground they will come out to board the ship tonight. We do not look like anything except a pleasure craft. I'm sure they were inside the keys when it happened. They will feel contempt for us and they will be sure we are weak because they have seen only one man all day in the dinghy if they have watched."

"We tried to play it that way."

"Then if they find how things are on the turtle boat what then?"

"Ask Willie to come up here," he said to Antonio.

Willie came up, still lumpy-looking from the mosquito bites. His scratches looked better, though, and he was wearing only a pair of khaki shorts.

"How are you, jungle man?"

"I'm fine, Tom. Ara put some chloroform on the bites and they've stopped itching. Those damn mosquitoes are about a quarter of an inch long and black as ink."

"We've got ourselves pretty well fucked-up, Willie."

"Hell. We've been fucked-up from the start."

"Peters?"

"We've got him sewed up in canvas and some ice on him. He won't bring anything in the market. But he'll hold a couple of days."

"Listen, Willie. I was telling Antonio what I'd like to do was get in to where the .50's and the searchlight would bear on that hulk. But he says we can't get in without spooking the whole ocean and that it's no good."

“Sure,” Willie said. “He’s right. That’s three times you’ve been wrong today. I’m leading you by one less.”

“Do you think they will come out and try and board the ship?”

“I doubt it like hell,” Willie said.

“But they could.”

“They aren’t crazy. But they could be desperate enough to try it.”

The two of them were sitting on the deck of the flying bridge leaning back against the stays and the canvas. Willie rubbed the part of his right shoulder that had begun to itch again on the canvas.

“They could come out,” he said. “They did a crazy thing when they made that massacre.”

“Not from their point of view then. You have to remember it was when they had just lost their ship and they were desperate.”

“Well, they lost another ship today as well as a comrade. Maybe they were fond of the son of a bitch.”

“Probably. Or they wouldn’t have let him take up space.”

“He was a pretty good guy,” Willie said. “He took all that surrender talk and a grenade before he even made his play. He must have thought Peters was the captain because of his commanding manner and the way he spreched Kraut.”

“I guess so.”

“You know the frags went off below decks. They might never have heard them. How many rounds did you fire, Tom?”

“Not more than five.”

“The character fired one burp.”

“How loud did it all sound to you, Antonio?”

“It didn’t sound loud,” Antonio said. “We are downwind and to the north of it with the key between. It didn’t sound loud at all. But I could hear it clearly.”

“They might never have heard it,” Thomas Hudson said.

“But they must have seen the dinghy running around and their

ship careened. They're sure to think she's a trap. I don't think they will go near her."

"I think that's right," Willie agreed.

"But do you think they'll come out here?"

"You and God know just as much about that as I do. Aren't you the one who's always thinking in the Germans' minds?"

"Sure," Thomas Hudson said. "Sometimes I'm pretty good at it. But I'm not so hot today."

"You're thinking all right," Willie said. "You just ran into a bad streak."

"We could set a trap over there."

"You're just as trapped as you're trapping on her," Willie said.

"You go over and booby-trap her while it's still light."

"Now you're talking:' Willie said. "That's the old Tom. I'll booby-trap both hatches and that dead Kraut and the lee rail. You're thinking your way out of it now."

"Use plenty of stuff. We've got lots of stuff."

"She'll be booby-trapped till Christ won't have her."

"They're coming in with the dinghy," Antonio said.

"I'll get Ara and the necessary and get over there," Willie said.

"Don't blow yourself up."

"Don't think too much:' Willie said. "Get some rest, Tom. You're going to be up all night."

"So are you."

"The hell I am. When you want me they can wake me."

"I'll take the watch," Thomas Hudson said to Antonio. "When does our tide turn?"

"It's turned already but it is fighting with the current that the strong east wind blows out from the bay."

"Put Gil on the .50's and give George a break. Tell everybody to get a rest for the night."

"Why don't you take a drink, Tom?"

"I don't want one. What are you giving them to eat tonight?"

“A big piece of that wahoo boiled with Spanish sauce and black beans and rice. There aren’t any more canned fruits.”

“There were some on the list at Confites.”

“Yes. But they were crossed off.”

“Do you have any dried fruits?”

“Apricots.”

“Soak some tonight and give them to them for breakfast.”

“Henry won’t eat them for breakfast.”

“Well, give them to him the first meal he eats well. Have you plenty of soup?”

“Plenty.”

“How is ice?”

“We have plenty for a week if we don’t use too much on Peters. Why don’t you bury him at sea, Tom?”

“Maybe I will,” Thomas Hudson said. “He always said he’d like it.”

“He said so many things.”

“Yeah.”

“Tom, why don’t you take a drink?”

“All right,” said Thomas Hudson. “Do you have any gill left?”

“Your bottle is in the locker.”

“Do you have any water coconuts?”

“Yes.”

“Make me a gin and coconut water with some lime in it. If we have limes.”

“We have plenty of limes. Peters has some Scotch of his hidden if I can find it. Would you rather have that?”

“No. Find it and lock it up. We might need it.”

“I’ll make yours and hand it up.”

“Thank you. Maybe we’ll have good luck and they will come out tonight.”

“I can’t believe they will. I am of the school of Willie. But they might.”

“We look awfully tempting. And they need some sort of craft.”

“Yes, Tom. But they are not fools. You would not have been able to think in their heads if they were fools.”

“OK. Get the drink.” Thomas Hudson was glassing the keys with the big binoculars. “I’ll try to think in their heads some more.”

But he did not have any luck thinking in their heads. He was not thinking very well at all. He watched the dinghy, Ara in the stern and Willie out of sight, round the point of the key. He watched the flock of willet fly up finally and turn and head for one of the outer keys. Then he was alone and he sipped the drink that Antonio had made.

He thought how he had promised himself that he would not drink this trip, not even the cool one in the evening, so that he would not think of anything but work. He thought how he had planned to drive himself so he would sleep completely exhausted. But he made no excuses for this drink nor for the broken promise.

I drove myself, he thought. I did that all right. Now I might as well have this drink and think about something besides those other people. If they come out tonight we’ll have everything set for them. If they do not come out, I will go in after them tomorrow morning on the high tide.

So he sipped the drink, which was cold and clean-tasting, and he watched the broken line of the keys straight ahead and to the westward. A drink always unlocked his memory that he kept locked so carefully now and the keys reminded him of the days when they used to troll for tarpon when young Tom was a small boy. Those were different keys and the channels were wider.

There were no flamingoes but the other birds had been nearly all the same except for the flocks of big golden plover. He remembered the seasons when the plover were gray and the others when the black feathers had the golden tinge and he remembered young Tom’s pride at the first one he had ever brought home when he had his first single barrel twenty-gauge. He remembered how

Tom had stroked the plump white breast and touched the lovely black under-markings and how he had found the boy asleep that night in his bed with his arms around the bird. He had taken the bird away very softly hoping he would not wake the boy. The boy did not wake. His arms just closed up tightly and he rolled onto his back.

As he had taken the golden plover into the back room where the icebox was, he felt he had robbed the boy of it. But he had smoothed its plumage carefully and laid it on one of the grilled shelves of the icebox. The next day he had painted young Tom a picture of the golden plover and the boy had taken it with him when he went off to school that year. In the picture he had tried to get the fast, running quality of the bird and the back-ground was a long beach with coconut palms.

Then he remembered one time when they were in a tourist camp. He had wakened early and Tom was still asleep. He lay on his back with his arms crossed and he looked like the sculpture of a young knight lying on his tomb. Thomas Hudson had sketched him that way using a tomb that he remembered from Salisbury Cathedral. He was going to paint a canvas of it later but he did not do it because he thought it could be bad luck. A lot of good that did, he thought.

He looked into the sun that was low now and he could see Tom high up in the sun in a Spitfire. The aircraft was very high and very tiny and it shone like a fragment of broken mirror. He liked it up there, he said to himself. And it was a good rule you made about not drinking.

But over half of the drink was still in the paper-wrapped glass and there was still ice in it.

Courtesy of Peters, he thought. Then he remembered when they lived on the island in the old days and how Tom had read about the ice age at school and he was afraid it would come again.

“Papa,” he had said. “That is my only worry.”

“It can’t hit here,” Thomas Hudson had said.

“I know. But I can’t stand to think what it will do to all those people in Minnesota and Wisconsin and Michigan. Even Illinois and Indiana.”

“I don’t think we really have to worry about it,” Thomas Hudson had said. “It’s a dreadfully slow process if it comes.”

“I know,” young Tom had said. “But that’s the only thing I ever really worry about. That and the extinction of the passenger pigeon.”

That Tom, he thought, and put the drink into one of the empty frag holes and glassed the keys carefully. He saw nothing that might be a sailing skiff and he put the glasses down.

The best times they had, he thought, were on the island and out West. Except Europe, of course, and if I think about that I’ll think about the girl and it will be worse. I wonder where she is now. Sleeping with some general, I suppose. Well, I hope she gets a good one.

She looked awfully well and very beautiful when I saw her in Havana. I could think about her all night. But I won’t. It is indulgence enough to think about Tom. I wouldn’t do that without the drink. I’m glad I took it, though. There is a time to break all your rules. Maybe not all. I will think about him for a while and then I will work out our small problem for tonight when Willie and Ara get back. They’re a wonderful team. Willie learned that awful Spanish of his in the Philippines but they understand each other perfectly. Some of that is because Ara is a Basque and speaks bad Spanish, too. Christ, I’d hate to go aboard that hulk after Willie and Ara rig her.

Go ahead and drink the rest of your drink and think about something good. Tom’s dead and it’s all right to think about him. You’ll never get over it. But you are solid on it now. Remember some good happy times. You had plenty.

What were the happiest times? he thought. They were all happy,

really, in the time of innocence and the lack of useless money and still being able to work and eat. A bicycle was more fun than a motorcar. You saw things better and it kept you in good shape and coming home after you had ridden in the Bois you could coast down the Champs Élysees well past the Rond-Point and when you looked back to see what was behind you there, with the traffic moving in two streams, there rose the high gray of the great arch against the dusk. The horse chestnuts would be in bloom now. The trees would be black in the dusk as he pedalled now toward the Place de la Concorde and the upstanding blooms would be white and waxen. He would get off the racing bicycle to push it along the gravel path and see the horse chestnut trees slowly, and feel them overhead as he pushed the bicycle and felt the gravel under the thin soles of his shoes. He had bought this pair of racing shoes second-hand from a waiter he knew at the Select who had been an Olympic champion and he had paid for them by painting a canvas of the proprietor the way the proprietor had wished to be painted.

"A little in the style of Manet, Monsieur Hudson. If you can do it."

It was not a Manet that Manet would have signed but it looked more like Manet than it did like Hudson and it looked exactly like the proprietor. Thomas Hudson got the money for the bicycle shoes from it and for a long time they could have drinks on the house as well. Finally one night when he offered to pay for a drink, the offer was accepted and Thomas Hudson knew that payment on the portrait had been finished.

There was a waiter at the Closerie de Lilas who liked them and always gave them double-sized drinks so that by adding water they needed only one for the evening. So they moved down there. They would put Tom to bed and sit there together in the evenings at the old café, completely happy to be with each other. Then they would take a walk through the dark streets of the Montagne Sainte-Geneviève where the old houses had not yet been torn down and

try to come home some different way each night. They would go to bed and hear Tom breathing in his cot and the purring of the big cat that slept with him.

Thomas Hudson remembered how people were horrified that they let the cat sleep with the small boy and that they left him alone when they went out. But Tom always slept well and if he woke up, there was the cat, who was his best friend. The cat would let no one near the bed and he and Tom loved each other very much.

Now Tom was—the hell with that, he said to himself. It is something that happens to everybody. I should know about that by now. It is the only thing that is really final, though.

How do you know that? he asked himself. Going away can be final. Walking out the door can be final. Any form of real betrayal can be final. Dishonesty can be final. Selling out is final. But you are just talking now. Death is what is really final. I wish Ara and Willie would get back. They must be rigging that hulk up like a chamber of horrors. I've never liked to kill, ever. But Willie loves it. He is a strange boy and very good, too. He is just never satisfied that a thing cannot be done better.

He saw the dinghy coming. Then he heard her purring hum and then he watched her get clearer and bigger and then she was alongside.

Willie came up. He looked worse than ever and his bad eye was showing too much white. He drew himself up, saluted smartly, and said, "Permission to speak to the captain, sir?"

"Are you drunk?"

"No, Tommy. Enthusiastic."

"You've been drinking."

"Sure, Tom. We took a little rum with us for working around that cadaver. And then when we got through Ara urinated in the bottle and then booby-trapped the bottle. It's double booby-trapped."

“Did you rig her good?”

“Tommy, a little tiny gnome no bigger than a man’s hand couldn’t get on her without being blown clean back to gnome land. A cockroach couldn’t crawl on her. Ara was afraid the flies on the cadaver would set her off. We trapped her beautifully and delicately.”

“What’s Ara doing?”

“He’s disassembling and cleaning everything in a frenzy of enthusiasm.”

“How much rum did you guys take?”

“Less than half a bottle. It was my idea. It wasn’t Ara’s.”

“OK. Get the hell down with him and clean the weapons and check the .50’s.”

“You can’t check them really without firing them.”

“I know. But you check them completely without firing them. Throwaway the ammo that’s been in the breeches.”

“That’s smart.”

“Tell Henry to come up here and bring me a small glass of this and tell him to bring a drink for himself. Antonio knows what this drink is.”

“I’m glad you’re drinking a little again, Tom.”

“For Christ’s sake, don’t be glad or sad about whether I’m drinking or not drinking.”

“OK, Tom. But I don’t like to see you ride yourself like a horse riding on a horse’s back. Why don’t you be like a centaur?”

“Where did you learn about centaurs?”

“I read it in a book, Tommy. I’m educated. I’m educated far beyond my years.”

“You’re a good old son of a bitch,” Thomas Hudson told him. “Now get the hell down and do what I told you.”

“Yes sir. Tommy, when we finish this cruise will you let me buy one of the sea paintings out at the joint?”

“Don’t shit me.”

“I’m not doing that. Maybe the hell you don’t understand all the time.”

“That could be. Maybe all my life.”

“Tommy, I kid a lot. But you chased pretty.”

“We’ll see tomorrow. Tell Henry to bring a drink up. But I don’t want any.”

“No, Tommy. All we have tonight is a simple fight and I don’t think we’ll have it.”

“All right,” said Thomas Hudson. “Send it up. And get down off this fucking bridge and get to work.”

XX

Henry passed the two drinks up and swung up himself after them. He stood beside Thomas Hudson and leaned forward to look at the shadow of the far keys. There was a thin moon in the first quarter of the sky to the westward.

"Here's to your good health, Tom," Henry said. "I didn't look at the moon over my left shoulder."

"She's not new. She was new last night."

"Of course. And we didn't see her for the squall."

"That's right. How's everything below?"

"Excellent, Tom. Everybody's working and cheerful."

"How are Willie and Ara?"

"They drank a little rum, Tom, and it made them very cheerful. But they're not drinking now."

"No. They wouldn't."

"I look forward to this very much," Henry said. "So does Willie."

"I don't. But it's what we are here to do. You see, we want prisoners, Henry."

"I know."

"Because they made that mistake on the massacre key they don't want to be taken prisoner."

"I think that's putting it mildly," Henry said. "Do you think they will try to jump us tonight?"

"No. But we have to be alerted in case they do."

"We will be. But what do you really think they are going to do, Tom?"

"I can't figure it, Henry. If they are really desperate they will try

for the ship. If they have a radio operator left, he could fix our radio up and they could go across to Anguilas and just call a taxi and wait for it to take them home. They have every reason to try for the ship. Somebody could always have talked around Havana and they might know what we are."

"Who would talk?"

"Never speak ill of the deads," Thomas Hudson said. "But I'm afraid he might have when he was drinking."

"Willie is sure he did."

"Does he know anything?"

"No. He's just sure."

"It's a possibility. But they could also just try to make the mainland and make their way overland to Havana and get a Spanish ship out. Or an Argentine ship. But they don't want to be picked up on account of the massacre business. So I think they'll try something desperate."

"I hope so."

"If we can set it up," Thomas Hudson said.

But nothing happened all night long except the movement of the stars and the steady blowing of the east wind and the sucking of the currents past the ship. There was much phosphorescence in the water from the weed that the big tides and the sea made by the wind had torn up from the bottom, and it floated in and out and in again like cold strips and patches of white, unhealthy fire in the water.

The wind dropped a little before dawn and when it was light Thomas Hudson lay down and slept on the deck, lying on his belly with his face against a corner of the canvas. Antonio covered him and his weapon with a piece of canvas but Thomas Hudson was asleep and did not feel it.

Antonio took over the watch and when the tide was high so they swung free, he woke Thomas Hudson. They got the anchors in and started in with the dinghy going ahead and sounding and staking

any dubious points. The water on this flood tide was clean and clear by now and the piloting was difficult but not as it had been the day before. They had staked a branch of a tree in the channel where they had grounded the day before and Thomas Hudson looked back and saw its green leaves moving in the current.

Thomas Hudson looked ahead and followed the dinghy closely as she worked out the channel. They passed a long green key that had looked like a small round key when they had been head on to it. Then ahead in what looked like an unbroken but indented line of mangrove keys Gil, who had the glasses, said, "Stake, Tom. Dead ahead of the dinghy against the mangroves."

"Check," Thomas Hudson said. "Is it the canal?"

"It looks to be but I can't see the opening."

"It is very narrow on the chart. We will just about brush the mangroves on each side."

Then he remembered something. How could I be so stupid? he thought. But we had better go on now, anyway, and out through the channel. Then I can send them back. He had forgotten to tell Willie and Ara to detrap the hulk of the turtle boat. That is a hell of a thing to leave around if some poor fisherman comes onto it. Well, they can go back and detrap it.

The dinghy was signalling him now to keep hard over to the right of the three tiny spots of key and close against the mangroves. Then, as if to make sure he understood, they wheeled and came up. "The channel's right in along the mangroves," Willy shouted. "Leave the stake on your left. We're going ahead through. As long as you don't hear from us keep on steaming. It's just a deep creek."

"We forgot to detrap that turtle boat."

"I know," Willie shouted. "We'll go back after."

Ara grinned and spun the dinghy around and they went on ahead, Willie signalling that it was OK. They turned left and right and went out of sight into the green.

Thomas Hudson steered in their wake. There was plenty of

water although no such water showed on the chart. This old channel must have been scoured out by a hurricane, he thought. Many things have happened since the *U.S.S. Nokomis* had boats sounding in here.

Then he saw there were no birds rising from the mangroves as the dinghy went into the narrow brush river of the channel.

While he steered he spoke into the tubes to Henry in the forward cockpit, "We may get jumped in this channel. Have your .50's ready to fire from either bow and abeam. Keep behind the shield and watch for the flashes and pour it onto them."

"Yes, Tom."

To Antonio he said, "We may get jumped here. Keep well down and if we are fired on, aim below the flashes and pour it on. Keep way down."

"Gil," he said. "Put your glasses away. Take two frags and straighten the pins and put them there in the rack by my right hand. Straighten two pins on those extinguishers and then put your glasses away. They'll probably hit us from both sides. That's how they ought to."

"Tell me when to throw, Tom."

"Throw when you see the flashes. But loft it plenty because it has to fall through brush."

There were no birds at all and since the tide was high he knew that the birds had to be in the mangroves. The ship was entering the narrow river now and Thomas Hudson, bareheaded and barefooted and only wearing a pair of khaki shorts, felt as naked as a man can feel.

"You lie down, Gil," he said. "I'll tell you when to get up and throw."

Gil lay on the floor with the two fire extinguishers that were loaded with dynamite and a booster charge and were fired by the detonating assembly of a regulation frag, with its charger hacksawed off at the juncture of the fuse and a dynamite cap fitted

and crimped on.

Thomas Hudson looked at him once and saw how he was sweating. Then he looked at the mangroves on either side.

I could still try to back her out, he thought. But I don't believe I could, the way the tide is flowing.

He looked ahead at the green banks. The water was brown again now and the mangrove leaves were as shiny as though they were varnished. He looked to see where any had been cut or disturbed. But he saw nothing but the green leaves, the dark branches, and the roots that were exposed with the suction of the ship. There were a few crabs that showed when their holes under the mangrove roots were exposed.

They went on and the channel narrowed but he could see it opening wider ahead. Maybe I just had the jitters, he thought. Then he saw a crab come sliding out fast from the high mangrove roots and plop into the water. He looked hard into the mangroves but he could see nothing beyond the trunks and branches. Another crab came out very fast and went into the water.

Just then they opened on him. He did not see the blinking flash and he was hit before he heard the stutter of the gun and Gil was on his feet beside him. Antonio was firing tracers where he had seen the gun flash.

"Where the tracers are going," Thomas Hudson said to Gil.

Thomas Hudson felt as though someone had clubbed him three times with a baseball bat and his left leg was wet.

Gil lobbed the bomb with a high overhand motion and Thomas Hudson saw its long brass cylinder and conic nose shining in the sun. It was spinning, not going end over end.

"Down, Gil," he said and thought he ought to drop himself.

Then he knew he shouldn't but should hold the ship as she was. The twin .50's had opened up and he could hear them pounding and he felt the jolt of them through his bare feet. Very noisy, he thought. That will keep the bastards down.

He saw the blinding burst of the bomb before the roar came and the smoke started to rise. He smelled the smoke and the smell of broken branches and burned green leaves.

"Get up, Gil, and throw two frags. One on each side of the smoke."

Gil did not lob the frags. He threw them like the long throw from third base to first and in the air they looked like gray iron artichokes with a thin trickle of smoke coming from them.

Before they burst cracking white in the mangroves Thomas Hudson said into the tube, "Shoot the shit out of it, Henry. They can't run in there."

The smoke from the frags smelled differently from the bomb and Thomas Hudson said to Gil, "Throw two more frags. One beyond the bomb and one in this side close."

He watched the frags go and then hit the deck. He did not know whether he hit the deck or the deck hit him because the deck was very slippery from the blood that had been running down his leg and he fell hard. At the second burst he heard two fragments tear through the canvas. Others hit the hull.

"Help me up," he said to Gil. "You threw that last one close enough."

"Where are you hit, Tom?"

"A couple of places."

Ahead he saw Willie and Ara coming up the channel in the dinghy.

He spoke in the tube to Antonio and asked him to hand up a first aid kit to Gil.

Just then he saw Willie drop flat in the bow of the dinghy and start firing into the mangroves on the right. He could hear the dat-dat-dat of his Thompson gun. Then there was a longer burst. He put in both his motors and headed for them with all the speed the channel would allow. His idea of this speed was not completely accurate because he felt very sick. He felt sick into his bones and

through his chest and his bowels and the ache went into his testicles. He did not feel weak yet but he could feel the first onslaught of weakness.

"Get your guns to bear on the right bank," he said to Henry. "Willie's found more of them."

"Yes, Tom. Are you all right?"

"I'm hit but I'm all right. What about you and George?"

"We're fine."

"Open up any time you see anything."

"Yes, Tom."

Thomas Hudson stopped his engines and commenced to go astern again slowly to hold the ship outside the angle where Willie was firing. Willie had a clip in now with tracers in it and he was trying to spot the target for the ship.

"You got it, Henry?" he asked through the tube.

"Yes, Tom."

"Work on it and around it with short bursts."

He heard the .50s start slamming and he waved Ara and Willie in. They came in as fast as the little motor would bring them. Willie was firing all the time until they were under the lee of the ship.

Willie jumped aboard and came up on the flying bridge while Ara made the dinghy fast.

He looked at Tom and at Gil who was putting a tourniquet on his left leg as close to the crotch as he could tighten it.

"Jesus Christ," he said. "What you got, Tommy?"

"I don't know," Thomas Hudson said. He did not know, either. He could not see any of the wounds. All he saw was the color of the blood and it was dark so he did not worry. But there was too much of it and he felt very sick.

"What's in there, Willie?"

"I don't know. There was a guy with a burp gun fired on us and I got him. Or I'm pretty sure I did."

"I didn't hear it with the noise you made."

“You guys sounded like an ammunition dump going up. Do you think there’s anything still back there?”

“Still, maybe. We gave it the treatment.”

“We’ll have to work it out,” Willie said.

“We can let these sons of bitches hang and rattle,” Thomas Hudson said. “Or we can go in now and finish it.”

“I’d rather take care of you.”

Henry was probing with the .50s. He was as delicate as he was rough with a machine gun and with a pair of them all his qualities were doubled.

“Do you know where they are, Willie?”

“There’s only one place they can be.”

“Then let’s go in blasting and blow the shit out of them.”

“Spoken like an officer and a gentleman,” Willie said. “We sunk their skiff.”

“Oh. We didn’t hear that either,” Thomas Hudson said.

“It didn’t make much noise,” Willie said. “Ara chopped her open with a machete and cut the sail up. Christ couldn’t repair her in a month the best day he was in that carpenter shop.”

“You get up forward with Henry and George and have Ara and Antonio on the starboard side and let’s go in,” Thomas Hudson said. He felt very sick and strange, although there was no dizziness yet. The dressings Gil had put on contained the bleeding too easily and he knew it was internal. “Put lots of fire on and you signal me how to go. How close are they?”

“Right up against the shore behind the little rise of ground.”

“Can Gil reach it all right with the big ones?”

“I’ll shoot tracers to show him the target.”

“They’ll still be there?”

“They got no place to go. They saw us break up the skiff. They’re fighting Custer’s Last Stand in the mangroves. Christ, I wish I had some Anheuser Busch.”

“Ice cold in cans,” Thomas Hudson said. “Let’s get in.”

“You’re awfully white, Tommy,” Willie said. “And you’ve lost a lot of blood.”

“Let’s take her in fast then,” Thomas Hudson said. “I’m still all right.”

They closed fast with Willie with his head up over the starboard bow sometimes waving a correction.

Henry was traversing before and behind the rise that showed by the higher trees and George was working on what should be the lip of the rise.

“How is it, Willie?” Thomas Hudson said into the tube. “You got enough hulls up here to start a brass foundry,” Willie answered. “Lay her goddamn bow up against the bank and swing her broadside so Ara and Antonio can bear.”

Gil thought he saw something and fired. But it was the low branch of a tree that Henry had cut loose.

Thomas Hudson watched the bank come closer and closer until he could see individual leaves again. Then he swung her broadside until he heard Antonio firing and saw his tracers going in a little to the right of Willie’s. Ara was firing now, too. Then he came a little astern on his motors and swung her close to the bank but not so close that Gil could not throw.

“Throw an extinguisher,” he said. “Where Willie’s been shooting.”

Gil threw and again Thomas Hudson marvelled at the throw and at the shine of the brass cylinder whirling high through the air to drop almost exactly where it should. There was the flash and the roar and then the rising smoke and then Thomas Hudson saw a man walking toward them out of the smoke with his hands clasped over his head.

“Hold up the fire,” he said as rapidly as he could into two tubes.

But Ara had already fired and he saw the man slump forward into the mangroves on his knees with his head forward.

He spoke again and said, “Resume fire.” Then he said to Gil,

very tiredly, “Put in another one about the same place if you can. Then put in a couple of frags.”

He had had a prisoner. But he had lost him.

After a while he said, “Willie, you and Ara want to have a look?”

“Sure,” Willie said. “But keep some fire on while we go in. I want to go in from the back.”

“Tell Henry what you want. When do you want it off?”

“As soon as we clear the entrance.”

“All right, jungle man,” Thomas Hudson said and for the first time he had time to realize that he was probably going to die.

XXI

He heard the noise of a grenade bursting behind the small ridge. Then there was no more noise and no firing. He leaned heavily on the wheel and he watched the smoke of the grenade thin out in the wind.

"I'm going to take her on through as soon as I see the dinghy," he said to Gil.

He felt Antonio's arm around him and heard him say, "You lie down, Tom. I'm taking her."

"All right," he said and he took a last look down the narrow, green-banked river. The water was brown but clear and the tide was flowing strong.

Gil and Antonio helped him to lie down on the planking of the bridge. Then Antonio took the wheel. He went astern a little more to hold her against the tide and Thomas Hudson could feel the sweet rhythm of the big motors.

"Loosen the tourniquet a little," he said to Gil.

"We'll get the air mattress," Gil said.

"I like it on the deck," Thomas Hudson said. "I think it is better if I don't move much."

"Get a cushion under his head," Antonio said. He was looking down the channel.

In a little while he said, "They're waving us in, Tom," and Thomas Hudson felt the motors go ahead and the ship slide forward.

"Anchor her as soon as we're out of the channel."

"Yes, Tom. Don't talk."

Henry came up and took the wheel and the controls when they anchored. Now that they were in the open again, Thomas Hudson felt her swing into the wind.

"There's lots of water in here, Tom," Henry said.

"I know. All the way to Caibarién and the two channels are clear and well-marked."

"Please don't talk, Tom. Just lie quiet."

"Have Gil get a light blanket."

"I'll get it. I hope it doesn't hurt too much, Tommy."

"It hurts," Thomas Hudson said. "But not too bad. It doesn't hurt any worse than things hurt that you and I have shot together."

"Here's Willie," Henry said.

"You old son of a bitch," said Willie. "Don't talk. There were four in there with the guide. It was the main party. Then there was the one Ara got by mistake. He feels awful about it when you wanted a prisoner so much. He's crying and I told him to stay below. He just loosed off like anybody would."

"What did you throw the grenade at?"

"Just a place I didn't like the look of. Don't you talk, Tom."

"You have to go back and detrap that hulk."

"We're going right away and we'll check the other place. I wish the Christ we had a speed boat. Tommy, those goddamn fire extinguishers are better than an .83mm mortar."

"Not the same range."

"What the hell we want with range? That Gil was throwing them into a bushel basket."

"Get going."

"How bad are you, Tommy?"

"Pretty bad."

"Think you can make it?"

"I'm going to try."

"Keep perfectly still. Don't move for anything."

They were not gone long but it seemed a long time to Thomas

Hudson. He lay on his back in the shade of a canopy Antonio had rigged for him. Gil and George had unlaced the canvas from the windward side of the flying bridge and the wind came fresh and friendly. It was not as strong as it had been yesterday but it was steady from the east and the clouds were high and thin. The sky was the blue sky of the eastern part of the island where the trades blow strongest and Thomas Hudson lay and watched it and tried to hold his pain in control. He had refused the hypodermic of morphine that Henry had brought him because he thought he might still have to think. He knew he could always take it later on.

He lay there under the light blanket with the dressings on his three wounds. Gil had sifted them all full of sulfa when he dressed them and he could see sulfa spilled like sugar on the part of the deck where he had stood at the wheel while Gil had worked on him. When they had taken down the canvas, so he would have more air, he had noticed the three small holes where the bullets had come through and the others to the left and to the right. He had seen the gashes in the canvas from the grenade fragments.

As he lay there, Gil watched him and saw his salt-bleached head and his gray face above the light blanket. Gil was a simple boy. He was a great athlete and nearly as strong as Ara and if he could have hit a curve ball he would have been a very good ball player. He had a great throwing arm. Thomas Hudson looked at him and smiled, remembering the grenades. Then he smiled just to look at Gil and the long muscles of his arms.

"You should have been a pitcher," he said and his voice sounded strange to him.

"I never had control."

"You had it today."

"Maybe it wasn't really necessary before," Gil smiled. "You want some water on your mouth, Tommy. Just nod your head."

Thomas Hudson shook his head and looked out at the lake that was the inside passage. It showed white caps now. But they were

the small waves of a good sailing breeze and beyond them he could see the blue hills of the Turiguaño.

That's what we'll do, he thought. We'll head for the Central or for the other place and they may have a doctor there. No, it's too late in the season. But they can fly a good surgeon in. They are all fine people in there. A bad surgeon is worse than none and I can lie quiet until he comes and they move me. I ought to take a lot of sulfa. But I shouldn't drink water. Don't worry about it, boy, he said to himself. All your life is just pointed toward it. But why couldn't Ara not have shot that son of a bitch so we would have something to show for it all so it would have done some good. I don't mean good. I mean so it would have been some use. Hell, if they had had the firepower we had. They must have pulled the other stakes on the channels to suck us into that one. But maybe if we had the prisoner he would be stupid and know nothing. He would have been useful to have had though. We are not being very useful now. Sure we are. We are detrapping that old turtle boat.

Think about after the war and when you will paint again. There are so many good ones to paint and if you paint as well as you really can and keep out of all other things and do that, it is the true thing. You can paint the sea better than anyone now if you will do it and not get mixed up in other things. Hang on good now to how you truly want to do it. You must hold hard to life to do it. But life is a cheap thing beside a man's work. The only thing is that you need it. Hold it tight. Now is the true time you make your play. Make it now without hope of anything. You always coagulated well and you can make one more real play. We are not the lumpenproletariat. We are the best and we do it for free.

"Tom, do you want some water?" Gil asked again.

Thomas Hudson shook his head.

Three chickenshit bullets, he thought, to fuck good painting and prove nothing. Why did the poor bastards ever make that error on the massacre key? They could have surrendered and been all right. I

wonder who the one was who came out to surrender when Ara shot. He could have been like the boy they shot at massacre key. Why do they have to be such damned fanatics? We chased good and we will always fight. But I hope we are not fanatics.

Then he heard the noise of the outboard coming. He could not see it join them from where he lay and then Ara and Willie came up. Ara was sweating and they both were scratched by the brush.

"I am sorry, Tom," Ara said.

"Shit," said Thomas Hudson.

"Let's haul ass out of here," Willie said, "and I'll tell you. Ara, get the hell down on the anchor and send Antonio up here to take her."

"We're going in to the Central. It's faster."

"Smart," Willie said. "Now don't talk, Tom, and let me tell you." He stopped and put his hand on Thomas Hudson's forehead lightly and reached under the blanket and felt the pulse accurately but very gently.

"Don't die, you bastard," he said. "Just hold it and don't move."

"Roger," Thomas Hudson said.

"At the first fight there were three deads," Willie explained. He was to windward of Thomas Hudson sitting on the deck and he smelled sour of sweat and his bad eye was swung wild again and all the plastic surgery on his face showed white. Thomas Hudson lay very quietly and listened to him.

"They had two burp guns only but they were set up good. Gil's first extinguisher got them and the .50s cut the shit out of them. Antonio hit them too. Henry can really shoot the .50s."

"He always could."

"I mean with the heat on. So we detrapped that joint and it is very high now. Ara and I cut all the wires but we left the stuff. She's OK and I'll pinpoint the location of these other Krauts on the chart."

The anchor was up and the motors were turning.

"We didn't do so good, did we?" Thomas Hudson said.

“They outsmarted us. But we had the firepower. They didn’t do so good either. Don’t say anything to Ara about the prisoner. He feels bad enough. He says he squeezed off before he thought.”

The ship was heading toward the blue hills and gathering speed.

“Tommy,” Willie said. “I love you, you son of a bitch, and don’t die.”

Thomas Hudson looked at him without moving his head.

“Try and understand if it isn’t too hard.”

Thomas Hudson looked at him. He felt far away now and there were no problems at all. He felt the ship gathering her speed and the lovely throb of her engines against his shoulder blades which rested hard against the boards. He looked up and there was the sky that he had always loved and he looked across the great lagoon that he was quite sure, now, he would never paint and he eased his position a little to lessen the pain. The engines were around three thousand now, he thought, and they came through the deck and into him.

“I think I understand, Willie,” he said.

“Oh shit,” Willie said. “You never understand anybody that loves you.”

THE END

ERNEST

HEMINGWAY

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

HARPERPERENNIAL CLASSICS

The Garden of Eden

Ernest Hemingway

CONTENTS

Book I

Chapter One
Chapter Two
Chapter Three

Book II

Chapter Four
Chapter Five
Chapter Six
Chapter Seven
Chapter Eight

Book III

Chapter Nine
Chapter Ten
Chapter Eleven
Chapter Twelve
Chapter Thirteen
Chapter Fourteen
Chapter Fifteen
Chapter Sixteen
Chapter Seventeen
Chapter Eighteen
Chapter Nineteen
Chapter Twenty
Chapter Twenty-One
Chapter Twenty-Two
Chapter Twenty-Three
Chapter Twenty-Four

Book IV

Chapter Twenty-Five
Chapter Twenty-Six
Chapter Twenty-Seven
Chapter Twenty-Eight
Chapter Twenty-Nine
Chapter Thirty

Book One

Chapter One

They were living at le Grau du Roi then and the hotel was on a canal that ran from the walled city of Aigues Mortes straight down to the sea. They could see the towers of Aigues Mortes across the low plain of the Camargue and they rode there on their bicycles at some time of nearly every day along the white road that bordered the canal. In the evenings and the mornings when there was a rising tide sea bass would come into it and they would see the mullet jumping wildly to escape from the bass and watch the swelling bulge of the water as the bass attacked.

A jetty ran out into the blue and pleasant sea and they fished from the jetty and swam on the beach and each day helped the fishermen haul in the long net that brought the fish up onto the long sloping beach. They drank aperitifs in the cafe on the corner facing the sea and watched the sails of the mackerel fishing boats out in the Gulf of Lions. It was late in the spring and the mackerel were running and fishing people of the port were very busy. It was a cheerful and friendly town and the young couple liked the hotel, which had four rooms upstairs and a restaurant and two billiard tables downstairs facing the canal and the lighthouse. The room they lived in looked like the painting of Van Gogh's room at Arles except there was a double bed and two big windows and you could look out across the water and the marsh and sea meadows to the white town and bright beach of Palavas.

They were always hungry but they ate very well. They were hungry for breakfast which they ate at the cafe, ordering brioche and café au lait and eggs, and the type of preserve that they chose

and the manner in which the eggs were to be cooked was an excitement. They were always so hungry for breakfast that the girl often had a headache until the coffee came. But the coffee took the headache away. She took her coffee without sugar and the young man was learning to remember that.

On this morning there was brioche and red raspberry preserve and the eggs were boiled and there was a pat of butter that melted as they stirred them and salted them lightly and ground pepper over them in the cups. They were big eggs and fresh and the girl's were not cooked quite as long as the young man's. He remembered that easily and he was happy with his which he diced up with the spoon and ate with only the flow of the butter to moisten them and the fresh early morning texture and the bite of the coarsely ground pepper grains and the hot coffee and the chickory-fragrant bowl of café au lait.

The fishing boats were well out. They had gone out in the dark with the first rising of the breeze and the young man and the girl had wakened and heard them and then curled together under the sheet of the bed and slept again. They had made love when they were half awake with the light bright outside but the room still shadowed and then had lain together and been happy and tired and then made love again. Then they were so hungry that they did not think they would live until breakfast and now they were in the cafe eating and watching the sea and the sails and it was a new day again.

"What are you thinking?" the girl asked.

"Nothing."

"You have to think something."

"I was just feeling."

"How?"

"Happy."

"But I get so hungry," she said. "Is it normal do you think? Do you always get so hungry when you make love?"

“When you love somebody.”

“Oh, you know too much about it,” she said.

“No.”

“I don’t care. I love it and we don’t have to worry about anything do we?”

“Nothing.”

“What do you think we should do?”

“I don’t know,” he said. “What do you?”

“I don’t care at all. If you’d like to fish I should write a letter or maybe two and then we could swim before lunch.”

“To be hungry?”

“Don’t say it. I’m getting hungry already and we haven’t finished breakfast.”

“We can think about lunch.”

“And then after lunch?”

“We’ll take a nap like good children.”

“That’s an absolutely new idea,” she said. “Why have we never thought of that?”

“I have these Bashes of intuition,” he said. “I’m the inventive type.”

“I’m the destructive type,” she said. “And I’m going to destroy you. They’ll put a plaque up on the wall of the building outside the room. I’m going to wake up in the night and do something to you that you’ve never even heard of or imagined. I was going to last night but I was too sleepy.”

“You’re too sleepy to be dangerous.”

“Don’t lull yourself into any false security. Oh darling let’s have it hurry up and be lunch time.”

They sat there in their striped fishermen’s shirts and the shorts they had bought in the store that sold marine supplies, and they were very tan and their hair was streaked and faded by the sun and the sea. Most people thought they were brother and sister until they said they were married. Some did not believe that they were

married and that pleased the girl very much.

In those years only a very few people had ever come to the Mediterranean in the summer time and no one came to le Grau du Roi except a few people from Nîmes. There was no casino and no entertainment and except in the hottest months when people came to swim there was no one at the hotel. People did not wear fishermen's shirts then and this girl that he was married to was the first girl he had ever seen wearing one. She had bought the shirts for them and then had washed them in the basin in their room at the hotel to take the stiffness out of them. They were stiff and built for hard wear but the washings softened them and now they were worn and softened enough so that when he looked at the girl now her breasts showed beautifully against the worn cloth.

No one wore shorts either around the village and the girl could not wear them when they rode their bicycles. But in the village it did not matter because the people were very friendly and only the local priest disapproved. But the girl went to mass on Sunday wearing a skirt and a long-sleeved cashmere sweater with her hair covered with a scarf and the young man stood in the back of the church with the men. They gave twenty francs which was more than a dollar then and since the priest took up the collection himself their attitude toward the church was known and the wearing of shorts in the village was regarded as an eccentricity by foreigners rather than an attempt against the morality of the ports of the Camargue. The priest did not speak to them when they wore shorts but he did not denounce them and when they wore trousers in the evening the three of them bowed to each other.

"I'll go up and write the letters," the girl said and she got up and smiled at the waiter and went out of the cafe.

"Monsieur is going to fish?" the waiter asked when the young man, whose name was David Bourne, called him over and paid him.

"I think so. How is the tide?"

"This tide is very good," the waiter said. "I have some bait if you

want it."

"I can get some along the road."

"No. Use this. They're sandworms and there are plenty."

"Can you come out?"

"I'm on duty now. But maybe I can come out and see how you do. You have your gear?"

"lt's at the hotel."

"Stop by for the worms."

At the hotel the young man wanted to go up to the room and see the girl but instead he found the long, jointed bamboo pole and the basket with his fishing gear behind the desk where the room keys hung and went back out into the brightness of the road and on down to the cafe and out onto the glare of the jetty. The sun was hot but there was a fresh breeze and the tide was just starting to ebb. He wished that he had brought a casting rod and spoons so that he might cast out across the flow of the water from the canal over the rocks on the far side but instead he rigged his long pole with its cork and quill Heat and let a sandworm float gently along at a depth where he thought fish might be feeding.

He fished for some time with no luck and watched the mackerel boats tacking back and forth out on the blue sea and the shadows the high clouds made on the water. Then his float went under in a sharp descent with the line angling stiffly and he brought the pole up against the pull of a fish that was strong and driving wildly and making the line hiss through the water. He tried to hold it as lightly as he could and the long pole was bent to the breaking point of the line and trace by the fish which kept trying to go toward the open sea. The young man walked with him on the jetty to ease the strain but the fish kept pulling so that as he drove a quarter of the rod was forced under water.

The waiter had come from the cafe and was very excited. He was talking by the young man's side saying, "Hold him. Hold him. Hold him as softly as you can. He'll have to tire. Don't let him

break. Soft with him. Softly. Softly."

There was no way the young man could be softer with him except to get into the water with the fish and that did not make sense as the canal was deep. If I could only walk along the bank with him, he thought. But they had come to the very end of the jetty. More than half the pole was under water now.

"Just hold him softly," the waiter pleaded. "It's a strong trace." The fish bored deep, ran, zig-zagged and the long bamboo pole bent with his weight and his rapid, driving strength. Then he came up thrashing at the surface and then was down again and the young man found that although the fish felt as strong as ever the tragic violence was lessened and now he could be led around the end of the jetty and up the canal.

"Softly does it," the waiter said. "Oh softly now. Softly for us all."

Twice more the fish forced his way out to the open sea and twice the young man led him back and now he was leading him gently along the jetty toward the cafe.

"How is he?" asked the waiter.

"He's fine but we've beaten him."

"Don't say it," the waiter said. "Don't say it. We must tire him. Tire him. Tire him."

"He's got my arm tired," the young man said.

"Do you want me to take him?" the waiter asked hopefully.

"My God no."

"Just easy, easy, easy. Softly, softly, softly," the waiter said.

The young man worked the fish past the terrace of the cafe and into the canal. He was swimming just under the surface but was still strong and the young man wondered if they would take him all the way up the canal through the length of the town. There were many other people now and as they went by the hotel the girl saw them out of the window and shouted, "Oh what a wonderful fish! Wait for me! Wait for me!"

She had seen the fish clearly from above and his length and the shine of him in the water and her husband with the bamboo pole bent almost double and the procession of people following. When she got down to the canal bank and, running, caught up with the people, the procession had stopped. The waiter was in the water at the edge of the canal and her husband was guiding the fish slowly against the bank where there was a clump of weeds growing. The fish was on the surface now and the waiter bent down and brought his hands together from either side and then lifted the fish with his thumbs in both his gills and moved up the bank of the canal with him. He was a heavy fish and the waiter held him high against his chest with the head under his chin and the tail flopping against his thighs.

Several men were pounding the young man on the back and putting their arms around him and a woman from the fish market kissed him. Then the girl had her arms around him and kissed him and he said, "Did you see him?"

Then they all went over to see him laid out on the side of the road silver as a salmon and dark gunmetal shining on his back. He was a handsome beautifully built fish with great live eyes and he breathed slowly and brokenly.

"What is he?"

"A loup," he said. "That's a sea bass. They call them *bar* too.

They're a wonderful fish. This is the biggest one I've ever seen."

The waiter, whose name was André, came over and put his arms around David and kissed him and then he kissed the girl.

"Madame, it is necessary," he said. "It is truly necessary. No one ever caught such a fish on such tackle."

"We better have him weighed," David said.

They were at the cafe now. The young man had put the tackle away, after the weighing, and washed up and the fish was on a block of ice that had come in the *camion* from Nîmes to ice the mackerel catch. The fish had weighed a little over fifteen pounds.

On the ice he was still silver and beautiful but the color on his back had changed to gray. Only his eyes still looked alive. The mackerel fishing boats were coming in now and the women were unloading the shining blue and green and silver mackerel from the boats into baskets and carrying the heavy baskets on their heads to the fish house. It was a very good catch and the town was busy and happy.

"What are we going to do with the big fish?" the girl asked. "They're going to take him in and sell him," the young man said. "He's too big to cook here and they say it would be wicked to cut him up. Maybe he'll go right up to Paris. He'll end in some big restaurant. Or somebody very rich will buy him."

"He was so beautiful in the water," she said. "And when André held him up. I couldn't believe him when I saw him out of the window and you with your mob following you."

"We'll get a small one for us to eat. They're really wonderful. A small one ought to be grilled with butter and with herbs. They're like striped bass at home."

"I'm excited about the fish," she said. "Don't we have wonderful simple fun?"

They were hungry for lunch and the bottle of white wine was cold and they drank it as they ate the celery *rémoulade* and the small radishes and the home pickled mushrooms from the big glass jar. The bass was grilled and the grill marks showed on the silver skin and the butter melted on the hot plate. There was sliced lemon to press on the bass and fresh bread from the bakery and the wine cooled their tongues of the heat of the fried potatoes. It was good light, dry, cheerful unknown white wine and the restaurant was proud of it.

"We're not great conversationalists at meals," the girl said. "Do I bore you, darling?"

The young man laughed.

"Don't laugh at me, David."

"I wasn't. No. You don't bore me. I'd be happy looking at you if

you never said a word."

He poured her another small glass of the wine and filled his own.

"I have a big surprise. I didn't tell you, did I?" the girl said.

"What sort of surprise?"

"Oh it's very simple but it's very complicated."

"Tell me."

"No. You might like it and maybe you couldn't stand it."

"It sounds too dangerous."

"It's dangerous," she said. "But don't ask me. I'm going up to the room if I may."

The young man paid for the lunch and drank the wine that was left in the bottle. Then he went upstairs. The girl's clothes were folded on one of the Van Gogh chairs and she was waiting for him in the bed with the sheet over her. Her hair was spread out over the pillow and her eyes were laughing and he lifted the sheet and she said, "Hello, darling. Did you have a nice lunch?"

Afterwards they lay together with his arm under her head and were happy and lazy and he felt her turn her head from side to side and stroke it against his cheek. It felt silky and barely roughened from the sun and the sea. Then with her hair all forward over her face so it touched him as her head moved she started to play with him lightly and exploringly and then with delight and she said, "You do love me, don't you?"

He nodded and kissed the top of her head and then turned her head and held it and kissed her lips.

"Oh," she said. "Oh."

A long time later they were lying each holding the other close and she said, "And you love me just the way I am? You're sure."

"Yes," he said. "So much yes."

"Because I'm going to be changed."

"No," he said. "No. Not changed."

"I'm going to," she said. "It's for you. It's for me too. I won't

pretend it's not. But it will do something to you. I'm sure but I shouldn't say it."

"I like surprises but I like everything the way it is just now at this minute."

"Then maybe I shouldn't do it," she said. "Oh I'm sad. It was such a wonderful dangerous surprise. I thought about it for days and I didn't decide until this morning."

"If it's something you really want."

"It is," she said. "And I'm going to do it. You've liked everything we've done so far haven't you?"

"Yes."

"All right."

She slipped out of bed and stood straight with her long brown legs and her beautiful body tanned evenly from the far beach where they swam without suits. She held her shoulders back and her chin up and she shook her head so her heavy tawny hair slapped around her cheeks and then bowed forward so it all fell forward and covered her face. She pulled the striped shirt over her head and then shook her hair back and then sat in the chair in front of the mirror on the dresser and brushed it back looking at it critically. It fell to the top of her shoulders. She shook her head at the mirror. Then she pulled on her slacks and belted them and put on her faded blue rope-soled shoes.

"I have to ride up to Aigues Mortes," she said.

"Good," he said. "I'll come too."

"No. I have to go alone. It's about the surprise."

She kissed him goodbye and went down and he watched her mount her bicycle and go up the road riding smoothly and easily, her hair blowing in the wind.

The afternoon sun was in the window now and the room was too warm. The young man washed and put on his clothes and went down to walk on the beach. He knew he should swim but he was tired and after he had walked along the beach and then along a

path through the salt grass that led inland for a way he went back along the beach to the port and climbed up to the cafe. In the cafe he found the paper and ordered himself a *fine à l' eau* because he felt empty and hollow from making love.

They had been married three weeks and had come down on the train from Paris to Avignon with their bicycles, a suitcase with their town clothes, and a rucksack and a musette bag. They stayed at a good hotel in Avignon and left the suitcase there and had thought that they would ride to the Pont du Gard. But the mistral was blowing so they rode with the mistral down to Nîmes and stayed there at the Imperator and then had ridden down to Aigues Mortes still with the heavy wind behind them and then on to le Grau du Roi. They had been there ever since.

It had been wonderful and they had been truly happy and he had not known that you could love anyone so much that you cared about nothing else and other things seemed inexistent. He had many problems when he married but he had thought of none of them here nor of writing nor of anything but being with this girl whom he loved and was married to and he did not have the sudden deadly clarity that had always come after intercourse. That was gone. Now when they had made love they would eat and drink and make love again. It was a very simple world and he had never been truly happy in any other. He thought that it must be the same with her and certainly she acted in that way but today there had been this thing about the change and the surprise. But maybe it would be a happy change and a good surprise. The brandy and water as he drank it and read the local paper made him look forward to whatever it was.

This was the first time since they had come on the wedding trip that he had taken a drink of brandy or whiskey when they were not together. But he was not working and his only rules about drinking were never to drink before or while he was working. It would be good to work again but that would come soon enough as he well

knew and he must remember to be unselfish about it and make it as clear as he could that the enforced loneliness was regrettable and that he was not proud of it. He was sure she would be fine about it and she had her own resources but he hated to think of it, the work, starting when they were as they were now. It never could start of course without the clarity and he wondered if she knew that and if that was why she drove beyond what they had for something new that nothing could break. But what could it be? They could not be held tighter together than they were now and there was no badness afterwards. There was only happiness and loving each other and then hunger and replenishing and starting over.

He found that he had drunk the *fine à l'eau* and that it was getting late in the afternoon. He ordered another and started to concentrate on the paper. But the paper did not interest him as it should and he was looking out at the sea with late afternoon sun heavy on it when he heard her come into the cafe and say in her throaty voice, "Hello darling."

She came quickly to the table and sat down and lifted her chin and looked at him with the laughing eyes and the golden face with the tiny freckles. Her hair was cropped as short as a boy's. It was cut with no compromises. It was brushed back, heavy as always, but the sides were cut short and the ears that grew close to her head were clear and the tawny line of her hair was cropped close to her head and smooth and sweeping back. She turned her head and lifted her breasts and said, "Kiss me please."

He kissed her and looked at her face and at her hair and he kissed her again.

"Do you like it? Feel it how smooth. Feel it in back," she said. He felt it in back.

"Feel on my cheek and feel in front of my ear. Run your fingers up at the sides."

"You see," she said. "That's the surprise. I'm a girl. But now I'm a boy too and I can do anything and anything and anything."

“Sit here by me,” he said. “What do you want, brother.”

“Oh thank you,” she said. “I’ll take what you’re having. You see why it’s dangerous, don’t you?”

“Yes. I see.”

“But wasn’t I good to do it?”

“Maybe.”

“Not maybe. No. I thought about it. I’ve thought all about it. Why do we have to go by everyone else’s rules? We’re us.”

“We were having a good time and I didn’t feel any rules.”

“Would you please just put your hand over it again.”

He did and he kissed her.

“Oh you’re sweet,” she said. “And you do like it. I can feel and I can tell. You don’t have to love it. Just like it at first.”

“I like it,” he said. “And you have such a beautifully shaped head that it is very beautiful with the lovely bones of your face.”

“Don’t you like it at the sides?” she asked. “It isn’t faked or phony. It’s a true boy’s haircut and not from any beauty shop.”

“Who cut it?”

“The coiffeur at Aigues Mortes. The one who cut your hair a week ago. You told him how you wanted yours cut then and I told him to cut mine just the same as yours. He was very nice and wasn’t at all surprised. He wasn’t worried at all. He said exactly like yours? And I said exactly. Doesn’t it do anything to you, David?”

“Yes,” he said.

“Stupid people will think it is strange. But we must be proud. I love to be proud.”

“So do I,” he said. “We’ll start being proud now.”

They sat there in the cafe and watched the reflection of the setting sun over the water and watched the dusk come to the town and they drank the *fine à l’eau.* People came by the cafe without being rude to see the girl because they had been the only foreigners in the village and had been there now nearly three weeks and she was a great beauty and they liked her. Then there had been the big

fish today and ordinarily there would have been much talk about that but this other was a big thing in the village too. No decent girls had ever had their hair cut short like that in this part of the country and even in Paris it was rare and strange and could be beautiful or could be very bad. It could mean too much or it could only mean showing the beautiful shape of a head that could never be shown as well.

They ate a steak for dinner, rare, with mashed potatoes and flageolets and a salad and the girl asked if they might drink Tavel. "It is a great wine for people that are in love," she said.

She had always looked, he thought, exactly her age which was now twenty-one. He had been very proud of her for that. But tonight she did not look it. The lines of her cheekbones showed clear as he had never seen them before and she smiled and her face was heartbreaking.

In the room it was dark with only a little light from outside. It was cool now with the breeze and the top sheet was gone from the bed.

"Dave, you don't mind if we've gone to the devil, do you?"

"No, girl," he said.

"Don't call me girl."

"Where I'm holding you you are a girl," he said. He held her tight around her breasts and he opened and closed his fingers feeling her and the hard erect freshness between his fingers.

"They're just my dowry," she said. "The new is my surprise. Feel. No leave them. They'll be there. Feel my cheeks and the back of my neck. Oh it feels so wonderful and good and clean and new. Please love me David the way I am. Please understand and love me."

He had shut his eyes and he could feel the long light weight of her on him and her breasts pressing against him and her lips on his. He lay there and felt something and then her hand holding him and searching lower and he helped with his hands and then lay back in

the dark and did not think at all and only felt the weight and the strangeness inside and she said, “Now you can’t tell who is who can you?”

“No.”

“You are changing,” she said. “Oh you are. You are. Yes you are and you’re my girl Catherine. Will you change and be my girl and let me take you?”

“You’re Catherine.”

“No. I’m Peter. You’re my wonderful Catherine. You’re my beautiful lovely Catherine. You were so good to change. Oh thank you, Catherine, so much. Please understand. Please know and understand. I’m going to make love to you forever.”

At the end they were both dead and empty but it was not over. They lay side by side in the dark with their legs touching and her head was on his arm. The moon had risen and there was a little more light in the room. She ran her hand exploringly down over his belly without looking and said, “You don’t think I’m wicked?”

“Of course not. But how long have you thought about that?”

“Not all the time. But quite a lot. You were so wonderful to let it happen.”

The young man put his arms around the girl and held her very tight to him and felt her lovely breasts against his chest and kissed her on her dear mouth. He held her close and hard and inside himself he said goodbye and then goodbye and goodbye.

“Let’s lie very still and quiet and hold each other and not think at all,” he said and his heart said goodbye Catherine goodbye my lovely girl goodbye and good luck and goodbye.

Chapter Two

He stood up and looked up and down the beach, corked the bottle of oil and put it in a side pocket of the rucksack and then walked down to the sea feeling the sand grow cool under his feet. He looked at the girl on her back on the sloping beach, her eyes closed, her arms against her sides, and behind her the slanted square of canvas and the first tufts of beach grass. She ought not to stay too long in that position with the sun straight up and down on her, he thought. Then he walked out and dove Hat into the clear cold water and turned on his back and swam backstroke out to sea watching the beach beyond the steady beat of his legs and feet. He turned in the water and swam down to the bottom and touched the coarse sand and felt the heavy ridges of it and then came up to the surface and swam steadily in, seeing how slow he could keep the beat of his crawl. He walked up to the girl and saw that she was asleep. He found his wristwatch in the rucksack to check the time when he should wake her. There was a cold bottle of white wine wrapped in a newspaper and with their towels around it. He uncorked it without removing the paper or the towels and took a cool draught from the awkward bundle. Then he sat down to watch the girl and to look out to sea.

This sea was always colder than it looked, he thought. It did not really warm until the middle of summer except on the shallow beaches. This beach dropped off quite suddenly and the water had been sharply cold until the swimming warmed him. He looked out at the sea and the high clouds and noticed how far the fishing fleet was working to the westward. Then he looked at the girl sleeping

on the sand that was quite dry now and beginning to blow delicately with the rising wind when his feet stirred.

During the night he had felt her hands touching him. And when he woke it was in the moonlight and she had made the dark magic of the change again and he did not say no when she spoke to him and asked the questions and he felt the change so that it hurt him all through and when it was finished after they were both exhausted she was shaking and she whispered to him, “Now we have done it. Now we really have done it.”

Yes, he thought. Now we have really done it. And when she went to sleep suddenly like a tired young girl and lay beside him lovely in the moonlight that showed the beautiful new strange line of her head as she slept on her side he leaned over and said to her but not aloud, “I’m with you. No matter what else you have in your head I’m with you and I love you.”

In the morning he had been very hungry for breakfast but he waited for her to wake. He kissed her finally and she woke and smiled and got up sleepily and washed in the big basin and slouched in front of the mirror of the armoire and brushed her hair and looked at the mirror unsmiling and then smiled and touched her cheeks with the tips of her fingers and pulled a striped shirt over her head and then kissed him. She stood straight so her breasts pushed against his chest and she said, “Don’t worry, David. I’m your good girl come back again.”

But he was very worried now and he thought what will become of us if things have gone this wildly and this dangerously and this fast? What can there be that will not burn out in a fire that rages like that? We were happy and I am sure she was happy. But whoever knows? And who are you to judge and who participated and who accepted the change and lived it? If that is what she wants who are you not to wish her to have it? You’re lucky to have a wife like her and a sin is what you feel bad after and you don’t feel bad. Not with the wine you don’t feel bad, he told himself, and what will

you drink when the wine won't cover for you?

He took the bottle of oil out of the rucksack and put a little oil on the girl's chin and on her cheeks and on her nose and found a blue faded patterned handkerchief in the canvas pocket of the rucksack and laid it across her breast.

"Must I stop?" the girl asked. "I'm having the most wonderful dream."

"Finish the dream," he said.

"Thank you."

In a few minutes she breathed very deeply and shook her head and sat up.

"Let's go in now," she said.

They went in together and swam out and then played under water like porpoises. When they swam in they dried each other off with towels and he handed her the bottle of wine that was still cool in the rolled newspaper and they each took a drink and she looked at him and laughed.

"It's nice to drink it for thirst," she said. "You don't really mind being brothers do you?"

"No." He touched her forehead and her nose and then her cheeks and chin with the oil and then put it carefully above and behind her ears.

"I want to get behind my ears and neck tanned and over my cheekbones. All the new places."

"You're awfully dark, brother," he said. "You don't know how dark."

"I like it," the girl said. "But I want to be darker."

They lay on the beach on the firm sand that was dry now but still cool after the high tide had fallen. The young man put some oil on the palm of his hand and spread it lightly with his fingers over the girl's thighs and they glowed warm as the skin took the oil. He went on spreading it over her belly and breasts and the girl said sleepily, "We don't look very much like brothers when we're this

way do we?"

"No."

"I'm trying to be such a very good girl," she said. "Truly you don't have to worry darling until night. We won't let the night things come in the day."

At the hotel the postman was having a drink while he waited for the girl to sign for a large forwarding envelope heavy with enclosed letters from her bank in Paris. There were three letters re-addressed from his bank, too. It was the first mail since they had sent the hotel as a forwarding address. The young man gave the postman five francs and asked him to have another glass of wine with him at the zinc bar. The girl unhooked the key from the board and said, "I'll go up to the room and get cleaned up and meet you at the cafe."

After he finished his glass he said goodbye to the postman and walked down along the canal to the cafe. It was good to sit in the shade after walking back bareheaded in the sun from the far beach and it was pleasant and cool in the cafe. He ordered a vermouth and soda and took out his pocket knife and slit open his letters. All three envelopes were from his publishers and two of them were fat with clippings and the proofs of advertisements. He glanced at the clippings and then read the long letter. It was cheerful and guardedly optimistic. It was too early to tell how the book would do but everything looked good. Most of the reviews were excellent. Of course there were some. But that was to be expected. Sentences had been underlined in the reviews that would probably be used in the future advertisements. His publisher wished he could say more about how the book would do but he never made predictions as to sales. It was bad practice. The point was that the book could not have been better received. The reception was sensational really. But he would see the clippings. The first printing had been five thousand copies and on the strength of the reviews a second printing had been ordered. The upcoming advertisements would carry the phrase *Now in Its Second Printing.* His publisher hoped that he was as happy as he deserved to be and taking the rest that he so

richly deserved. He sent his best greetings to his wife.

The young man borrowed a pencil from the waiter and commenced to multiply $2.50 by one thousand. That was easy. Ten percent of that was two hundred and fifty dollars. Five times that was twelve hundred and fifty dollars. Deduct seven hundred and fifty dollars for the advance. That left five hundred dollars earned by the first printing.

Now there was the second printing. Say that was two thousand. That was twelve and a half percent of five thousand dollars. If that was how the contract was. That would be six hundred and twenty-five dollars. But maybe it did not go up to twelve and a half percent until ten thousand. Well it was still five hundred dollars. That would still leave a thousand.

He started to read the reviews and found that he had drunk the vermouth without ever noticing it. He ordered another and returned the pencil to the waiter. He was still reading the reviews when the girl came in bringing her heavy envelope of letters.

"I didn't know they'd come," she said. "Let me see them. Please let me see them."

The waiter brought her a vermouth and putting it down saw the picture as the girl unfolded a clipping.

"C'est Monsieur?" he asked.

"Yes it is," the girl said and held it up for him to see.

"But differently dressed," the waiter said. "Do they write about the marriage? May I see a picture of Madame?"

"Not about the marriage. Criticisms of a book by Monsieur."

"Magnificent," said the waiter who was deeply moved. "Is Madame also a writer?"

"No," the girl said not looking up from the clippings. "Madame is a housewife."

The waiter laughed proudly. "Madame is probably in the cinema."

They both read clippings and then the girl put the one she was

reading down and said, “I’m frightened by them and all the things they say. How can we be us and have the things we have and do what we do and you be this that’s in the clippings?”

“I’ve had them before,” the young man said. “They’re bad for you but it doesn’t last.”

“They’re terrible,” she said. “They could destroy you if you thought about them or believed them. You don’t think I married you because you are what they say you are in these clippings do you?”

“No. I want to read them and then we’ll seal them up in the envelope.”

“I know you have to read them. I don’t want to be stupid about them. But even in an envelope it’s awful to have them with us. It’s like bringing along somebody’s ashes in a jar.”

“Plenty of people would be happy if their damned husbands had good reviews.”

“I’m not plenty of people and you’re not my damned husband. Please let’s not fight.”

“We won’t. You read them and if there’s anything good you tell me and if they say anything about the book that’s intelligent that we don’t know you tell me. The book’s made some money already,” he told her.

“That’s wonderful. I’m so glad. But we know it’s good. If the reviews had said it was worthless and it never made a cent I would have been just as proud and just as happy.”

I wouldn’t, the young man thought. But he did not say it. He went on reading the reviews, unfolding them and folding them up again and putting them back in the envelope. The girl sat opening envelopes and reading her letters without interest. Then she looked out of the cafe at the sea. Her face was a dark gold brown and she had brushed her hair straight back from her forehead the way the sea had pulled it when she had come out of the water and where it was cropped close and on her cheeks the sun had burned it to white

gold against the brown of her skin. She looked out at the sea and her eyes were very sad. Then she went back to opening letters. There was one long typewritten one that she read with concentration. Then she went on opening and reading the other letters. The young man looked at her and thought she looked a little as though she were shelling peas.

"What was in the letters?" the young man asked. "There were checks in some."

"Big ones?"

"Two."

"That's fine," he said.

"Don't go away like that. You always said it never made any difference."

"Have I said anything?"

"No. You just went away."

"I'm sorry," he said. "How big are they?"

"Not much really. But good for us. They've been deposited. It's because I'm married. I told you it was the best thing for us to be married. I know it doesn't mean anything as capital but this is spendable. We can spend it and it doesn't hurt anybody and it's for that. It doesn't have anything to do with regular income nor what I get if I live to be twenty-five or if I ever live to be thirty. This is ours for anything we want to do. Neither of us will have to worry about balances for a while. It's that simple."

"The book has paid back the advance and made about a thousand dollars," he said.

"Isn't that awfully good when it's only just come out?"

"It's all right. Should we have another one of these?" he asked.

"Let's drink something else."

"How much vermouth did you drink?"

"Only the one. I must say it was dull."

"I drank two and didn't even taste them."

"What is there that's real?" she said.

“Did you ever drink Armagnac and soda? That’s real enough.”

“Good. Let’s try that.”

The waiter brought the Armagnac and the young man told him to bring a cold bottle of Perrier water instead of the syphon. The waiter poured two large Armagnacs and the young man put ice in the big glasses and poured in the Perrier.

“This will fix us,” he said. “It’s a hell of a thing to drink before lunch though.”

The girl took a long sip. “It’s good,” she said. “It has a fresh clean healthy ugly taste.” She took another long sip. “I can really feel it. Can you?”

“Yes,” he said and took a deep breath. “I can feel it.”

She drank from the glass again and smiled and the laugh wrinkles came at the corner of her eyes. The cold Perrier had made the heavy brandy alive.

“For heroes,” he said.

“I don’t mind being a hero,” she said. “We’re not like other people. We don’t have to call each other darling or my dear or my love nor any of that to make a point. Darling and my dearest and my very dearest and all that are obscene to me and we call each other by our Christian names. You know what I’m trying to say. Why do we have to do other things like everyone does?”

“You’re a very intelligent girl.”

“All right Davie,” she said. “Why do we have to be stuffy? Why don’t we keep on and travel now when it can never be more fun? We’ll do everything you want. If you’d been a European with a lawyer my money would have been yours anyway. It *is* yours.”

“The hell with it.”

“All right. The hell with it. But we’ll spend it and I think it’s wonderful. You can write afterwards. That way we can have the fun before I have a baby for one thing. How do I know when I’ll have a baby even? Now it’s all getting dull and dusty talking about it. Can’t we just do it and not talk about it?”

“What if I want to write? The minute you’re not going to do something it will probably make you want to do it.”

“Then write, stupid. You didn’t say you wouldn’t write. Nobody said anything about worrying if you wrote. Did they?”

But somewhere something had been said and now he could not remember it because he had been thinking ahead.

“If you want to write go ahead and I’ll amuse myself. I don’t have to leave you when you write do I?”

“But where would you like us to go now when people begin to come here?”

“Anywhere you want to go. Will you do it, David?”

“For how long?”

“For as long as we want. Six months. Nine months. A year.”

“All right,” he said.

“Really?”

“Sure.”

“You’re awfully good. If I didn’t love you for anything else I’d love you for decisions.”

“They’re easy to make when you haven’t seen how too many of them can turn out.”

He drank the hero drink but it did not taste so good and he ordered a fresh bottle of cold Perrier and made a short drink without ice.

“Make me one please. Short like yours. And then let’s let it start and have lunch.”

Chapter Three

That night in bed when they were still awake she said in the dark, “We don’t always have to do the devil things either. Please know that.”

“I know.”

“I love it the way we were before and I’m always your girl. Don’t ever be lonely. You know that. I’m how you want but I’m how I want too and it isn’t as though it wasn’t for us both. You don’t have to talk. I’m only telling a story to put you to sleep because you’re my good lovely husband and my brother too. I love you and when we go to Africa I’ll be your African girl too.”

“Are we going to Africa?”

“Aren’t we? Don’t you remember? That was what it was about today. So we could go there or anywhere. Isn’t that where we’re going?”

‘Why didn’t you say it?”

“I didn’t want to interfere. I said wherever you wanted. I’d go anywhere. But I thought that was where you wanted.”

“It’s too early to go to Africa now. It’s the big rains and afterwards the grass is too high and it’s very cold.”

“We could go to bed and keep warm and hear the rain on a tin roof.”

“No, it’s too early. The roads turn to mud and you can’t get around and everything is like a swamp and the grass gets so tall you can’t see.”

“Then where should we go?”

“We can go to Spain but Sevilla is over and so is San Isidro in

Madrid and it's early for there too. It's too early for the Basque coast. It's still cold and rainy. It rains everywhere there now."

"Isn't there a hot part where we could swim the way we do here?"

"You can't swim in Spain the way we do here. You'd get arrested."

"What a bore. Let's wait to go there then because I want us to get darker."

"Why do you want to be so dark?"

"I don't know. Why do you want anything? Right now it's the thing that I want most. That we don't have I mean. Doesn't it make you excited to have me getting so dark?"

"Uh-huh. I love it."

"Did you think I could ever be this dark?"

"No, because you're blond."

"I can because I'm lion color and they can go dark. But I want every part of me dark and it's getting that way and you'll be darker than an Indian and that takes us further away from other people. You see why it's important."

"What will we be?"

"I don't know. Maybe we'll just be us. Only changed. That's maybe the best thing. And we will keep on won't we?"

"Sure. We can go over by the Estérel and explore and find another place the way we found this one."

"We can do that. There are lots of wild places and nobody is there in the summer. We could get a car and then we could go everywhere. Spain too when we want. Once we're really dark it won't be hard to keep unless we had to live in towns. We don't want to be in towns in the summer."

"How dark are you going to get?"

"As dark as I can. We'll have to see. I wish I had some Indian blood. I'm going to be so dark you won't be able to stand it. I can't wait to go up on the beach tomorrow."

She went to sleep that way with her head back and her chin up as though she were in the sun on the beach, breathing softly, and then she curled toward him on her side and the young man lay awake and thought about the day. It is very possible that I couldn't get started, he thought, and it probably is sound to not think about it at all and just enjoy what we have. When I have to work I will. Nothing can stop that. The last book is good and I must make a better one now. This nonsense that we do is fun although I don't know how much of it is nonsense and how much is serious. Drinking brandy at noon is no damn good and already the simple aperitifs mean nothing. That is not a good sign. She changes from a girl into a boy and back to a girl carelessly and happily. She sleeps easily and beautifully and you will sleep too because all you truly know is that you feel good. You did not sell anything for the money, he thought. Everything she said about the money was true. Actually it all was true. Everything was free for a time.

What was it that she had said about destruction? He could not remember that. She'd said it but he could not remember it.

Then he was tired of trying to remember and he looked at the girl and kissed her cheek very lightly and she did not wake. He loved her very much and everything about her and he went to sleep thinking about her cheek against his lips and how the next day they would both be darker from the sun and how dark can she become, he thought, and how dark will she ever really be?

Book Two

Chapter Four

It was late afternoon and the small low car came down from the black road across the hills and headlands with the dark blue ocean always on the right onto a deserted boulevard that bordered a flat beach of two miles of yellow sand at Hendaye. Well ahead on the ocean side was the bulk of a big hotel and a casino and on the left there were newly planted trees and Basque villas white-washed and brown timbered set in their own trees and plantings. The two young people in the car rode down the boulevard slowly looking out at the magnificent beach and at the mountains of Spain that showed blue in this light as the car passed the casino and the big hotel and went on toward the end of the boulevard. Ahead was the mouth of the river that flowed into the ocean. The tide was out and across the bright sand they saw the ancient Spanish town and the green hills across the bay and, at the far point, the lighthouse. They stopped the car.

"It's a lovely place," the girl said.

"There's a cafe with tables under the trees," the young man said. "Old trees."

"The trees are strange," the girl said. "It's all new planting. I wonder why they planted mimosas."

"To compete with where we've come from."

"I suppose so. It all looks awfully new. But it's a wonderful beach. I never saw such a big beach in France nor with such smooth and fine sand. Biarritz is a horror. Let's drive up by the cafe."

They drove back up the right side of the road. The young man pulled the car to the curb and killed the ignition. They crossed to

the outdoor cafe and it was pleasant to eat by themselves and be conscious of the people that they did not know eating at the other tables.

That night the wind rose and in their corner room high up in the big hotel they heard the heavy fall of the surf on the beach. In the dark the young man pulled a light blanket up over the sheet and the girl said, “Aren’t you glad we decided to stay?”

“I like to hear the surf pound.”

“So do I.”

They lay close together and listened to the sea. Her head was on his chest and she moved it against his chin and then moved up in the bed and put her cheek against his and pressed it there. She kissed him and he could feel her hand touching him.

“That’s good,” she said in the darkness. “That’s lovely. You’re sure you don’t want me to change?”

“Not now. Now I’m cold. Please hold me warm.”

“I love you when you feel cold against me.”

“If it gets this cold here at night we’ll have to wear pyjama tops. That will be fun for breakfast in bed.”

“It’s the Atlantic ocean,” she said. “Listen to it.”

“We’ll have a good time while we’re here,” he told her. “If you want we’ll stay a while. If you want we’ll go. There are plenty of places to go.”

“We might stay a few days and see.”

“Good. If we do I’d like to start to write.”

“That would be wonderful. We’ll look around tomorrow. You could work here in the room if I were out couldn’t you? Until we found some place?”

“Sure.”

“You know you must never worry about me because I love you and we’re us against all the others. Please kiss me,” she said.

He kissed her.

“You know I haven’t done anything bad to us. I had to do it. You

know that."

He did not say anything and listened to the weight of the surf falling on the hard wet sand in the night.

The next morning there was still heavy surf and the rain came in gusts. They could not see the Spanish coast and when it cleared between the driven squalls of rain and they could see across the angry sea in the bay there were heavy clouds that came down to the base of the mountains. Catherine had gone out in a raincoat after breakfast and had left him to work in the room. It had gone so simply and easily that he thought it was probably worthless. Be careful, he said to himself, it is all very well for you to write simply and the simpler the better. But do not start to think so damned simply. Know how complicated it is and then state it simply. Do you suppose the Grau du Roi time was all simple because you could write a little of it simply?

He went on writing in pencil in the cheap, lined, school notebook that was called a *cahier* and already numbered one in roman numeral. He stopped finally and put the notebook in a suitcase with a cardboard box of pencils and the cone-shaped sharpener, leaving the five pencils he had dulled to point up for the next day, and took his raincoat from the hanger in the closet and walked down the stairs to the lobby of the hotel. He looked into the hotel bar which was gloomy and pleasant in the rain and already had some customers and left his key at the desk. The assistant concierge reached into the mailbox as he hung up the key and said, "Madame left this for Monsieur."

He opened the note which said, David, didn't want to disturb you am at the cafe love Catherine. He put on the old trench coat, found a *boina* in the pocket and walked out of the hotel into the rain.

She was at a corner table in the small cafe and before her was a clouded yellow-tinged drink and a plate with one small dark red freshwater crayfish and the debris of others. She was very far ahead of him. "Where have you been, stranger?"

"Just down the road a piece." He noticed that her face was rain-

washed and he concentrated on what rain did to heavily tanned skin. She looked very nice too in spite of it and he was happy to see her this way.

"Did you get going?" the girl asked.

"Good enough."

"You worked then. That's fine."

The waiter had been serving three Spaniards who were sitting at a table next to the door. He came over now holding a glass and an ordinary Pernod bottle and a small narrow-lipped pitcher of water. There were lumps of ice in the water. *"Pour Monsieur aussi?"* he asked.

"Yes," the young man said. "Please."

The waiter poured their high glasses half full of the off-yellow liquid and started to pour the water slowly into the girl's glass. But the young man said, "I'll do it," and the waiter took the bottle away. He seemed relieved to be taking it away and the young man poured the water in a very thin stream and the girl watched the absinthe cloud opalescently, It felt warm as her fingers held the glass and then as it lost the yellow cast and began to look milky it cooled sharply and the young man let the water fall in a drop at a time.

"Why does it have to go in so slowly?" the girl asked.

"It breaks up and goes to pieces if the water pours in too fast," he explained. "Then it's flat and worthless. There ought to be a glass on top with ice and just a little hole for the water to drip. But everybody would know what it was then."

"I had to drink up fast before because two G.N .'s were in," the girl said.

"G.N.'s?"

"Whatyoumacallits nationals. In khaki with bicycles and black leather pistol holsters. I had to engulp the evidence."

"Engulp?"

"Sorry. Once I engulped it I can't say it."

“You want to be careful about absinthe.”

“It only makes me feel easier about things.”

“And nothing else does?”

He finished making the absinthe for her, holding it well short of mildness. “Go ahead,” he told her. “Don’t wait for me.” She took a long sip and then he took her glass from her and drank and said, “Thank you, Ma’am. That puts heart in a man.”

“So make your own, you clipping reader,” she said.

“What was that?” the young man said to her.

“I didn’t say it.”

But she had said it and he said to her, “Why don’t you just shut up about the clippings.”

“Why?” she said, leaning toward him and speaking too loudly.

“Why should I shut up? Just because you wrote this morning? Do you think I married you because you’re a writer? You and your clippings.”

“All right,” the young man said. “Can you tell me the rest of it when we’re by ourselves?”

“Don’t ever think for a moment I won’t,” she said.

“I guess not,” he said.

“Don’t guess,” she said. “You can be certain.”

David Bourne stood up and went over to the hanger and lifted his raincoat and went out the door without looking back.

At the table Catherine raised her glass and tasted the absinthe very carefully and went on tasting it in little sips.

The door opened and David came back in and walked up to the table. He was wearing his trench coat and had his *boina* pulled low on his forehead. “Do you have the keys to the car?”

“Yes,” she said.

“May I have them?”

She gave them to him but said, “Don’t be stupid, David. It was the rain and you being the only one who had worked. Sit down.”

“Do you want me to?”

“Please,” she said.

He sat down. That didn’t make much sense, he thought. You got up to go out and take the damned car and stay out and the hell with her and then you come back in and have to ask for the key and then sit down like a slob. He picked up his glass and took a drink. The drink was good anyway.

“What are you going to do about lunch?” he asked.

“You say where and I’ll eat it with you. You do still love me, don’t you?”

“Don’t be silly.”

“That was a sordid quarrel,” Catherine said.

“The first one too.”

“It was my fault about the clippings.”

“Let’s not mention the god damned clippings.”

“That’s what it was all about.”

“It was you thinking about them when you were drinking. Bringing them up because you were drinking.”

“It sounds like regurgitating,” she said. “Awful. Actually my tongue just slipped making a joke.”

“You had to have them in your head to bring them out that way.”

“All right,” she said. “I thought maybe it was all over.”

“It is.”

“Well why do you keep on insisting and insisting about it for then?”

“We shouldn’t have taken this drink.”

“No. Of course not. Especially me. But you certainly needed it. Do you think it will do you any good?”

“Do we have to do this now?” he asked.

“I’m certainly going to stop it. It bores me.”

“That’s the one damned word in the language I can’t stand.”

“Lucky you with only one word like that in the language.”

“Oh shit,’ he said. “Eat lunch by yourself.”

“No. I won’t. We’ll eat lunch together and behave like human beings.”

“All right.”

“I’m sorry. It really was a joke and it just misfired. Truly David that was all.”

Chapter Five

The tide was far out when David Bourne woke and the sun was bright on the beach and the sea was a dark blue. The hills showed green and new washed and the clouds had gone from the mountains. Catherine was still sleeping and he looked at her and watched her regular breathing and the sun on her face and thought, how strange that the sun on her eyes should not wake her.

After he had taken a shower and brushed his teeth and shaved, he was hungry for breakfast but he pulled on a pair of shorts and a sweater and found his notebook and pencils and the sharpener and sat at the table by the window that looked out over the estuary of the river to Spain. He started to write and he forgot about Catherine and what he saw from the window and the writing went by itself as it did with him when he was lucky. He wrote it exactly and the sinister part only showed as the light feathering of a smooth swell on a calm day marking the reef beneath.

When he had worked for a time, he looked at Catherine, still sleeping, her lips smiling now and the rectangle of sunlight from the open window falling across the brown of her body and lighting her dark face and tawny head against the rumpled white of the sheet and the unused pillow. It's too late to get breakfast now, he thought. I'll leave a note and go down to the cafe and get a café crème and something. But while he was putting his work ~way Catherine woke and came over to him as he was closing the suitcase and put her arms around him and kissed him on the back of his neck and said, "I'm your lazy naked wife."

"What did you wake up for?"

“I don’t know. But tell me where you’re going and I’ll be there in five minutes.”

“I’m going to the cafe to get some breakfast.”

“Go ahead and I’ll join you. You worked didn’t you?”

“Sure.”

“Weren’t you wonderful to after yesterday and everything. I’m so proud. Kiss me and look at us in the mirror on the bathroom door.”

He kissed her and they looked into the full length mirror.

“It’s so nice not to feel overdressed,” she said. “You be good and don’t get in any trouble on your way to the cafe. Order me an *oeuf au jambon* too. Don’t wait for me. I’m sorry I made you wait so long for breakfast.”

At the cafe he found the morning paper and the Paris papers of the day before and had his coffee and milk and the Bayonne ham with a big beautifully fresh egg that he ground coarse pepper over sparsely and spread a little mustard on before he broke the yolk. When Catherine had not come and her egg was in danger of getting cold he ate it too, swabbing the flat dish clean with a piece of the fresh baked bread.

“Here comes Madame,” the waiter said. “I’ll bring another *plat* for her.”

She had put on a skirt and cashmere sweater and pearls and toweled her head but combed it damp and straight and wet and the tawny color of her hair did not show to make the contrast with her incredibly darkened face. “It’s such a beautiful day,” she said.

“I’m sorry to be late.”

“Where are you dressed for?”

“Biarritz. I thought I’d drive in. Do you want to come?”

“You want to go alone.”

“Yes,” she said. “But you’re welcome.”

As he stood she said, “I’m going to bring you back a surprise.”

“No, don’t.”

“Yes. And you’ll like it.”

“Let me go along and keep you from doing anything crazy.”

“No. It’s better if I do it alone. I’ll be back in the afternoon. And don’t wait for lunch.”

David read the papers and then walked out through the town looking for chalets that might be for rent or for a part of town that might be good to live in and found the newly built up area pleasant but dull. He loved the view across the bay and the estuary to the Spanish side and the old gray stone of Fuenterrabiá and shining white of the houses that spread out from it and the brown mountains with the blue shadows. He wondered why the storm had gone so quickly and thought it must have been only the northern edge of a storm that came in across the Bay of Biscay. Biscay was Vizcaya but that was the Basque province further down the coast well beyond San Sebastian. The mountains that he saw beyond the roofs of the border town of Irun were in Guipúzcoa and beyond them would be Navarra and Navarra was Navarre. And what are we doing here, he thought, and what am I doing walking through a beach resort town looking at newly planted magnolias and bloody mimosas and watching for to-rent signs on phony Basque villas? You didn’t work hard enough this morning to make your brain that stupid or are you just hung over from yesterday? You didn’t work at all really.

And you better soon because everything’s going too fast and you’re going with it and you’ll be through before ever you know it. Maybe you’re through now. All right. Don’t start. At least you remember that much. And he walked on through the town, his vision sharpened by spleen and tempered by the ash beauty of the day.

The breeze from the sea was blowing through the room and he was reading with his shoulders and the small of his back against two pillows and another folded behind his head. He was sleepy after lunch but he felt hollow with waiting for her and he read and

waited. Then he heard the door open and she came in and for an instant he did not know her. She stood there with her hands below her breasts on the cashmere sweater and breathing as though she had been running.

"Oh, no," she said. "No."

Then she was on the bed pushing her head against him saying, "No. No. Please David. Don't you at all?"

He held her head close against his chest and felt it smooth close clipped and coarsely silky and she pushed it hard against him again and again.

"What did you do, Devil?"

She raised her head and looked at him and her lips pressed against his and she moved them from side to side and moved on the bed so her body was pressed against his.

"Now I can tell," she said. "I'm so glad. It was such a big chance. I'm your new girl now so we'd better find out."

"Let me see."

"I'll show you but let me go a minute."

She came back and stood by the bed with the sun on her through the window. She had dropped the skirt and was barefoot wearing only the sweater and the pearls.

"Take a good look," she said. "Because this is how I am."

He took a good look at the long dark legs the straight standing body the dark face and the sculptured tawny head and she looked at him and said, "Thank you."

"How did you do it?"

"Can I tell you in bed?"

"If you tell me in a hurry."

"No. Not in a hurry. Let me tell. First I had the idea on the road somewhere after Aix en Provence. At Nîmes when we were walking in the garden I think. But I didn't know how it would work or how to tell them how to do it. Then I thought it out and yesterday I decided."

David stroked his hand over her head from her neck over the top of her head to her forehead.

"Let me tell," she said. "I knew they must have good coiffeurs in Biarritz because of the English. So when I got there I went to the best place and I told the coiffeur that I wanted it all brushed forward and he brushed it and it came down to my nose and I could hardly see through it and I said I wanted it cut like a boy when he would first go to public school. He asked me what school so I said Eton or Winchester because they were the only schools I could remember except Rugby and I didn't want Rugby certainly. He said which. So I said Eton but forward all the way. So after he was finished and I looked like the most attractive girl who ever went to Eton I just had him keep on shortening it until Eton was all gone and then I had him keep on shortening it. Then he said very severely that is *not* an Eton crop, Mademoiselle. And I said I didn't want an Eton crop, Monsieur. That was the only way I knew how to explain what I wanted and it is Madame not Mademoiselle. So then I had him shorten it some more and then I kept him shortening it and it is either wonderful or terrible. You don't mind it on my forehead? When it was Eton it fell in my eye."

"It's wonderful."

"It's awfully classic," she said. "But it feels like an animal. Feel it."

He felt it.

"Don't worry about it being too classic," she said. "My mouth balances it. Now can we make love?"

She bent her head forward and he pulled the sweater over her head and down off her arms and bent over her neck to unhook the safety clasp.

"No leave them."

She lay back on the bed her brown legs tight together and her head against the flat sheet the pearls slanted away from the dark rise of her breasts. Her eyes were shut and her arms were by her

sides. She *was* a new girl and he saw her mouth was changed too. She was breathing very carefully and she said, “You do everything. From the beginning. From the very beginning.”

“Is this the beginning?”

“Oh yes. And don’t wait too long. No don’t wait—”

In the night she lay curled around him with her head below his chest and stroked it softly across him from one flank to another and then came up to put her lips on his and put her arms around him and said, “You’re so lovely and loyal when you are asleep and you didn’t wake and didn’t wake. I thought you wouldn’t and it was lovely. You were so loyal to me. Did you think it was a dream? Don’t wake. I’m going to sleep but if I don’t I’ll be a wild girl. She stays awake and takes care of you. You sleep and know I’m here. Please sleep.”

In the morning when he woke there was the lovely body that he knew close against him and he looked and saw the waxed-wood dark shoulders and neck and the fair tawny head close and smooth lying as a small animal and he shifted down in the bed and turned toward her and kissed her forehead with her hair under his lips and then her eyes and then gently, her mouth.

“I’m asleep.”

“So was I.”

“I know. Feel how strange. All night it was wonderful how strange.”

“Not strange.”

“Say so if you want. Oh we fit so wonderfully. Can we both go to sleep?”

“Do you want to be asleep?”

“Us both asleep.”

“I’ll try.”

“Are you asleep?”

“No.”

“Please try.”

“I’m trying.”

“Shut your eyes then. How can you sleep if you won’t shut your

eyes?"

"I like to see you in the morning all new and strange."

"Was I good to invent it?"

"Don't talk."

"It's the only way to slow things. I have already. Couldn't you tell? Of course you could. Couldn't you tell now and now and now like our hearts beating together it is the same I know it's only that that counts but we don't count it's so lovely and so good so good and lovely—"

She came back to the big room and went to the mirror and sat and brushed her hair looking at herself critically.

"Let's have breakfast in bed," she said. "And can we have champagne if it's not wicked? In the brut they have Lanson and Perrier-Jouët of the good. May I ring?"

"Yes," he said and went under the shower. Before he put it on full force he could hear her voice on the telephone.

When he came out she was sitting back very formally against two pillows with all the pillows neatly shaken out and placed two and two at the head of the bed.

"Do I look all right with my head wet?"

"It's just damp. You dried it with the towel."

"I can cut it shorter on the forehead. I can do that myself. Or you can."

"I'd like it if it came over your eyes."

"Maybe it will," she said. "Who knows? Maybe we'll get tired of being classical. And today we'll stay on the beach all through noon. We'll go way far down it and we can tan really when the people all come in for lunch and then we'll ride to St. Jean to eat when we're hungry at the Bar Basque. But first you'll make us go to the beach because we need to."

"Good."

David moved a chair over and put his hand close on hers and she looked at him and said, "Two days ago I understood everything

and then the absinthe made me turn on it."

"I know," David told her. "You couldn't help it."

"But I hurt you about the clippings."

"No," he said. "You tried. You didn't make it."

"I'm so sorry, David. Please believe me."

"Everybody has strange things that mean things to them. You couldn't help it."

"No," the girl said and shook her head.

"It's all right then," David said. "Don't cry. It's all right."

"I never cry," she said. "But I can't help it."

"I know it and you're beautiful when you cry."

"No. Don't say it. But I never cried before did I?"

"Never."

"But will it be bad for you if we stay here just two days on the beach? We haven't had any chance to swim and it would be silly to have been here and not to swim. Where are we going to go when we leave here? Oh. We haven't decided yet. We'll probably decide tonight or in the morning. Where would you suggest?"

"I think anywhere would be fine," David said.

"Well maybe that's where we will go."

"It's a big place."

"It's nice to be alone though and I'll pack us nicely."

"There's nothing much to do except put in toilet things and close two bags."

"We can leave in the morning if you want. Truly I don't want to do anything to you or have any bad effect on you."

The waiter knocked on the door.

"There was no more Perrier-Jouët, Madame, so I brought the Lanson."

She had stopped crying and David's hand was still close on hers and he said, "I know."

Chapter Six

They had spent the morning at the Prado and now were sitting at a place in a building with thick stone walls. It was cool and very old. There were wine casks around the walls. The tables were old and thick and the chairs were worn. The light came from the door. The waiter brought them glasses of manzanilla from the lowland near Cádiz called the Marismas with thin slices of *jamón serrano,* a smoky, hard cured ham from pigs that fed on acorns, and bright red spicy *salchichón,* another even spicier dark sausage from a town called Vich and anchovies and garlic olives. They ate these and drank more of the manzanilla, which was light and nutty tasting.

Catherine had a Spanish-English Method book with a green cover on the table close to her hand and David had a stack of the morning papers. It was a hot day but cool in the old building and the waiter asked, "Do you want gazpacho?" He was an old man and he filled their glasses again.

"Do you think the señorita would like it?"

"Try her," the waiter said gravely as though he were speaking of a mare.

It came in a large bowl with ice floating with the slices of crisp cucumber, tomato, garlic bread, green and red peppers, and the coarsely peppered liquid that tasted lightly of oil and vinegar.

"It's a salad soup," Catherine said. "It's delicious."

"Es gazpacho," the waiter said.

They drank Valdepeñas now from a big pitcher and it started to build with the foundation of the *marismeño* only held back temporarily by the dilution of the gazpacho which it moved in on

confidently. It built solidly.

"What is this wine?" Catherine asked.

"It's an African wine," David said.

"They always say that Africa begins at the Pyrenees," Catherine said. "I remember how impressed I was when I first heard it."

"That's one of those easy sayings," David said. "It's more complicated than that. Just drink it."

"But how can I tell about where Africa begins if I've never been there? People are always telling you tricky things."

"Sure. You can tell."

"The Basque country certainly wasn't like Africa or anything I ever heard about Africa."

"Neither is Asturias nor Galicia but once you're in from the coast it gets to be Africa fast enough."

"But why didn't they ever paint that country?" Catherine asked. "In all the backgrounds it is always the mountains out by the Escorial."

"The sierra," David said. "Nobody wanted to buy pictures of Castilla the way you saw it. They never did have landscape painters. The painters painted what was ordered."

"Except Greco's Toledo. It's terrible to have such a wonderful country and no good painters ever paint it," Catherine said.

"What should we eat after the gazpacho?" David said. The proprietor, who was a short middle-aged man, heavily built and square faced, had come over. "He thinks we ought to have meat of some kind."

"Hay solomillo muy bueno," the owner insisted.

"No, please," Catherine said. "Just a salad."

"Well, at least drink a little wine," the proprietor said and refilled the pitcher from the spigot of the cask behind the bar.

"I shouldn't drink," Catherine said. "I'm sorry I'm talking so much. I'm sorry if I talked stupidly. I usually do."

"You talk very interestingly and awfully well for a hot day like

this. Does the wine make you talkative?"

"It's a different sort of talkative than absinthe," Catherine said.

"It doesn't feel dangerous. I've started on my good new life and I'm reading now and looking outward and trying not to think about myself so much and I'm going to keep it up but we ought not to be in any town this time of year. Maybe we'll go. The whole way here I saw wonderful things to paint and I can't paint at all and never could. But I know wonderful things to write and I can't even write a letter that isn't stupid. I never wanted to be a painter nor a writer until I came to this country. Now it's just like being hungry all the time and there's nothing you can ever do about it."

"The country is here. You don't have to do anything about it. It's always here. The Prado's here," David said.

"There's nothing except through yourself," she said. "And I don't want to die and it be gone."

"You have every mile we drove. All the yellow country and the white hills and the chaff blowing and the long lines of poplars by the road. You know what you saw and what you felt and it's yours. Don't you have le Grau du Roi and Aigues Mortes and all the Camargue that we rode through on our bikes? This will be the same."

"But what about when I'm dead?"

"Then you're dead."

"But I can't stand to be dead."

"Then don't let it happen till it happens. Look at things and listen and feel."

"What if I can't remember?"

He had spoken about death as though it did not matter. She drank the wine and looked at the thick stone walls in which there were only small windows with bars high up that gave onto a narrow street where the sun did not shine. The doorway, though, gave onto an arcade and the bright sunlight on the worn stones of the square.

"When you start to live outside yourself," Catherine said, "it's all

dangerous. Maybe I'd better go back into our world, your and my world that I made up; we made up I mean. I was a great success in that world. It was only four weeks ago. I think maybe I will be again."

The salad came and then there was its greenness on the dark table and the sun on the plaza beyond the arcade.

"Do you feel better?" David asked.

"Yes," she said. "I was thinking so much about myself that I was getting impossible again, like a painter and I was my own picture. It was awful. Now that I'm all right again I hope it still lasts."

It had rained hard and now the heat was broken. They were in the cool shutter-slatted dimness of the big room in The Palace and had bathed together in the deep water in the long deep tub and then had turned the plug and let the full force of the water splash and How over them, swirling as it drained away. They had blotted each other with the huge towels and then come to the bed. As they lay on the bed there was a cool breeze that came through the slats of the blinds and moved over them. Catherine lay propped on her elbows with her chin on her hands. "Do you think it would be fun if I went back to being a boy again? It wouldn't be any trouble."

"I like you the way you are now."

"It's sort of tempting. But I shouldn't do it in Spain I suppose. It's such a formal country."

"Stay the way you are."

'What makes your voice be different when you say it? I think I'll do it."

"No. Not now."

"Thank you for the not now. Should I make love this time as a girl and then do it?"

"You're a girl. You are a girl. You're my lovely girl Catherine."

"Yes I am your girl and I love you and I love you and I love you."

"Don't talk."

"Yes I will. I'm your girl Catherine and I love you please I love you always always always—"

“You don’t have to keep saying it. I can tell.”

“I like to say it and I have to say it and I’ve been a fine girl and a good girl and I will again. I promise I will again.

“You don’t have to say it.”

“Oh yes I do. I say it and I said it and you said it. You now please. Please you.”

They lay quiet for a long time and she said, “I love you so much and you’re such a good husband.”

“You blessed.”

“Was I what you wanted?”

“What do you think?”

“I hope I was.”

“You were.”

“I promised truly and I will and I’ll keep it. Now can I be a boy again?”

“Why?”

“Just for a little while.”

“Why?”

“I loved it and I don’t miss it but I’d like to be again in bed at night if it isn’t bad for you. Can I be again? If it’s not bad for you?”

“The hell with if it’s bad for me.”

“Then can I?”

“Do you really want to?”

He had kept from saying have to so she said, “I don’t have to but please if it’s all right. Can I please?”

“All right.” He kissed her and held her to him.

“Nobody can tell which way I am but us. I’ll only be a boy at night and won’t embarrass you. Don’t worry about it please.”

“All right, boy.”

“I lied when I said I didn’t have to. It came so suddenly today.”

He shut his eyes and did not think and she kissed him and it had gone further now and he could tell and feel the desperateness.

“Now you change. Please. Don’t make me change you. Must I? All right I will. You’re changed now. You are. You did it too. You are. You did it too. I did it to you but you did it. Yes you did. You’re my sweet dearest darling Catherine. You’re my sweet my lovely Catherine. You’re my girl my dearest only girl. Oh thank you thank you my girl—”

She lay there a long time and he thought that she had gone to sleep. Then she moved away very slowly lifting herself lightly on her elbows and said, “I have a wonderful surprise for myself for tomorrow. I’m going to the Prado in the morning and see all the pictures as a boy.”

“I give up,” David said.

Chapter Seven

In the morning he got up while she was still sleeping and went out into the bright early morning freshness of the high plateau air. He walked in the street up the hill to the Plaza Santa Ana and had breakfast at a cafe and read the local papers. Catherine had wanted to be at the Prado at ten when it opened and before he left he had set the alarm to wake her at nine. Outside on the street, walking up the hill he had thought of her sleeping, the beautiful rumpled head that looked like an ancient coin lying against the white sheet, the pillow pushed away, the upper sheet showing the curves of her body. It lasted a month, he thought, or almost. And the other time from le Grau du Roi to Hendaye was two months. No, less, because she started thinking of it in Nîmes. It wasn't two months. We've been married three months and two weeks and I hope I make her happy always but in this I do not think anybody can take care of anybody. It's enough to stay in it. The difference is that she asked this time, he told himself. She did ask.

When he had read the papers and then paid for his breakfast and walked out into the heat that had come back to the plateau when the wind had changed, he made his way to the cool, formal, sad politeness of the bank, where he found mail that had been forwarded from Paris. He opened and read mail while he waited through the lengthy, many-windowed formalities of cashing a draft which had been sent from his bank to this, their Madrid correspondent.

Finally with the heavy notes buttoned into his jacket pocket he carne out into the glare again and stopped at the newsstand to buy

the English and American papers that had come in on the morning Sud Express. He bought some bullfight weeklies to wrap the English language papers in and then walked down the Carrera San Geronimo to the cool friendly morning gloom of the Buffet Italianos. There was no one in the place yet and he remembered that he had made no rendezvous with Catherine.

"What will you drink?" the waiter asked him.

"Beer," he said.

"This isn't a beer place."

"Don't you have beer?"

"Yes. But it's not a beer place."

"Up yours," he said and re-rolled the papers and went out and walked across the street and back on the other side to turn to the left into the Calle Vittoria and on to the Cervezería Alvarez. He sat at a table under the awning in the passageway and drank a big cold glass of the draft beer.

The waiter was probably only making conversation, he thought, and what the man said was quite true. It isn't a beer place. He was just being literal. He wasn't being insolent. That was a very bad thing to say and he had no defense against it. It was a shitty thing to do. He drank a second beer and called the waiter to pay.

"*Y la Señora?"* the waiter said.

"At the Museo del Prado. I'm going to get her."

"Well, until you get back," the waiter said.

He walked back to the hotel by a downhill shortcut. The key was at the desk so he rode up to their Boor and left the papers and the mail on a table in the room and locked most of the money in his suitcase. The room was made up and the shutters were lowered against the heat so that the room was darkened. He washed and then sorted through his mail and took four letters out and put them in his hip pocket. He took the Paris editions of *The New York Herald,* the *Chicago Tribune* and the *London Daily Mail* down with him to the bar of the hotel stopping at the desk to leave the key and to ask the

clerk to tell Madame, when she carne in, that he was in the bar.

He sat on a stool at the bar and ordered a *marismeño* and opened and read his letters while he ate the garlic-flavored olives from the saucer the bartender had placed before him with his glass. One of the letters had two cuttings of reviews of his novel from monthly magazines and he read them with no feeling that they dealt with him or with anything that he had written.

He put the cuttings back in the envelope. They had been understanding and perceptive reviews but to him they had meant nothing. He read the letter from the publisher with the same detachment. The book had sold well and they thought that it might continue selling on into the fall although nobody could ever tell about such things. Certainly, so far, it had received an extraordinarily fine critical reception and the way would be open for his next book. It was a great advantage that this was his second and not his first novel. It was tragic how often first novels were the only good novels American writers had in them. But this, his publisher went on, his second, validated all the promise his first had shown. It was an unusual summer in New York, cold and wet. Oh Christ, David thought, the hell with how it was in New York and the hell with that thin-lipped bastard Coolidge fishing for trout in a high stiff collar in a fish hatchery in the Black Hills we stole from the Sioux and the Cheyenne and bathtub-ginned-up writers wondering if their baby does the Charleston. And the hell with the promise he had validated. What promise to whom? To *The Dial,* to *The Bookman,* to *The New Republic?* No, he had shown it. Let me show you my promise that I'm going to validate it. What shit.

"Hello, young man," said a voice. "What are you looking so indignant about?"

"Hello, Colonel," David said and felt suddenly happy. "What the hell are you doing here?"

The Colonel, who had deep blue eyes, sandy hair and a tanned face that looked as though it had been carved out of flint by a tired

sculptor who had broken his chisel on it, picked up David's glass and tasted the *marismeño*.

"Bring me a bottle of whatever this young man is drinking to that table," he said to the bartender. "Bring a cold bottle. You don't need to ice it. Bring it immediately."

"Yes sir," said the bartender. "Very good sir."

"Come along," the Colonel said to David, leading him to the table in the corner of the room. "You're looking very well."

"So are you."

Colonel John Boyle was wearing a dark blue suit of a cloth that looked stiff but cool and a blue shirt and black tie. "I'm always well," he said. "Do you want a job?"

"No," said David.

"Just like that. Don't even ask what it is." His voice sounded as though he had hawked it up out of a dusty throat.

The wine came and the waiter filled two glasses and put down saucers of the garlic olives and of hazelnuts.

"No anchovies?" the Colonel asked. "What sort of a *fonda* is this?"

The bartender smiled and went for the anchovies.

"Excellent wine," the Colonel said. "First rate. I always hoped your taste would improve. Now why don't you want a job? You've just finished a book."

"I'm on my honeymoon."

"Silly expression," the Colonel said. "I never liked it. It sounds sticky. Why didn't you say you've just been married? It makes no difference. You'd be worthless in any event."

"What was the job?"

"No use talking about it now. Who did you marry? Anyone I know?"

"Catherine Hill."

"Knew her father. Very odd type. Killed himself in a car. His wife too."

“I never knew them.”

“You never knew him?”

“No.”

“Strange. But perfectly understandable. He’s no loss to you as a father-in-law. The mother was very lonely they say. Stupid way for grown up people to be killed. Where did you meet this girl?”

“In Paris.”

“She has a silly uncle who lives there. He’s really worthless. Do you know him?”

“I’ve seen him at the races.”

“At Longchamps and Auteuil. How could you help it?”

“I didn’t marry her family.”

“Of course not. But you always do. Dead or alive.”

“Not the uncles and aunts.”

“Well anyway, have fun. You know, I liked the book. Has it done well?”

“It’s done pretty well.”

“It moved me very deeply,” the Colonel said. “You’re a deceptive son of a bitch.”

“So are you, John.”

“I hope so,” the Colonel said.

David saw Catherine at the door and stood up. She came over to them and David said, “This is Colonel Boyle.”

“How do you do, my dear?”

Catherine looked at him and smiled and sat down at the table. David watched her and it seemed as though she were holding her breath.

“Are you tired?” David asked.

“I think so.”

“Have a glass of this,” the Colonel said.

“Would it be all right if I had an absinthe?”

“Of course,” David said. “I’ll have one too.”

“Not for me,” the Colonel said to the bartender. “This bottle’s

lost its freshness. Put it back to chill and bring me a glass from a cold bottle."

"Do you like the real Pernod?" he asked Catherine.

"Yes," she said. "I'm shy with people and it helps."

"It's an excellent drink," he said. "I'd join you but I have work I must do after lunch."

"I'm sorry I forgot to make a rendezvous," David said.

"This is very nice."

"I stopped by for the mail at the bank. There's quite a lot for you. I left it in the room."

"I don't care about it," she said.

"I saw you in the Prado looking at the Grecos," the Colonel said.

"I saw you too," she said. "Do you always look at pictures as though you owned them and were deciding how to have them re-hung properly?"

"Probably," the Colonel said. "Do you always look at them as though you were the young chief of a warrior tribe who had gotten loose from his councillors and was looking at that marble of Leda and the Swan?"

Catherine blushed under her dark tan and looked at David and then at the Colonel.

"I like you," she said. "Tell me some more."

"I like you," he said. "And I envy David. Is he everything you want?"

"Don't you know?"

"'To me the visible world is visible,'" the Colonel said. "Now go on and take another sip of that wormwood-tasting truth serum."

"I don't need it now."

"Aren't you shy now? Drink it anyway. It's good for you. You're the darkest white girl I've ever seen. Your father was very dark though."

"I must have his skin. My mother was very fair."

"I never knew her."

“Did you know my father well?”

“Quite well.”

“How was he?”

“He was a very difficult and charming man. Are you really shy?”

“Truly. Ask David.”

“You get over it awfully quickly.”

“You rode over it. How was my father?”

“He was the shyest man I ever knew and he could be the most charming.”

“Did he have to use Pernod too?”

“He used everything.”

“Do I remind you of him?”

“Not at all.”

“That’s good. Does David?”

“Not in the least.”

“That’s even better. How did you know I was a boy in the Prado?”

“Why shouldn’t you be?”

“I only started it again last evening. I was a girl for almost a month. Ask David.”

“You don’t need to say ask David. What are you right now?”

“A boy if it’s all right with you.”

“It’s fine with me. But you’re not.”

“I just wanted to say it,” she said. “Now that I said it I don’t have to be it. But it was wonderful in the Prado. That was why I wanted to tell David about it.”

“You’ll have plenty of time to tell David.”

“Yes,” she said. “We have time for things.”

“Tell me where you got so dark,” the Colonel said. “Do you know how dark you are?”

“That was from le Grau du Roi and then not far from la Napoule. There was a cove there with a trail that went down to it through the pines. You couldn’t see it from the road.”

“How long did it take to get so dark?”

“About three months.”

“And what are you going to do with it?”

“Wear it,” she said. “It’s very becoming in bed.”

“I shouldn’t think you’d want to waste it in town.”

“The Prado isn’t wasting. I don’t really wear it. It’s me. I really am this dark. The sun just develops it. I wish I was darker.”

“You probably will be then,” the Colonel said. “Do you have other things like that to look forward to?”

“Just every day,” Catherine said. “I look forward to every day.”

“And has today been a good one?”

“Yes. You know it has. You were there.”

“Will you and David lunch with me?”

“All right,” Catherine said. “I’ll go up and change. Will you wait for me?”

“Don’t you want to finish your drink?” David asked.

“I don’t care about it,” she said. “Don’t worry about me. I won’t be shy.”

She walked to the door and they both looked after her.

“Was I too rough?” the Colonel asked. “I hope not. She’s a very lovely girl.”

“I just hope I’m good for her.”

“You are. How are you doing yourself?”

“All right I think.”

“Are you happy?”

“Very.”

“Remember everything is right until it’s wrong. You’ll know when it’s wrong.”

“You think so?”

“I’m quite sure. If you don’t it doesn’t matter. Nothing will matter then.”

“How fast will it go?”

“I didn’t say anything about speed. What are you talking

about?"

"Sorry."

"It's what you have, so have a lovely time."

"We do."

"So I see. There's only one thing."

"What?"

"Take good care of her."

"That's all you've got to tell me?"

"One small thing more: The get's no good."

"There isn't any get yet."

"It's kinder to shoot the get."

"Kinder?"

"Better."

They talked about people for a while, the Colonel speaking outrageously, and then David saw Catherine come through the door wearing a white sharkskin outfit to show how really dark she was.

"You do really look extraordinarily beautiful," the Colonel said to Catherine. "But you must try to get darker."

"Thank you. I will," she said. "We don't have to go out now in the heat do we? Can't we sit here in the cool? We can eat here in the grill."

"You're lunching with me," the Colonel said.

"No please. You're lunching with us."

David stood up uncertainly. There were more people at the bar now. Looking down at the table he saw that he had drunk Catherine's drink as well as his own. He did not remember drinking either of them.

It was the siesta time and they lay on the bed and David was reading by the light that came in the window on the left of the bed where he had pulled up one of the slatted curtains about a third of its length. The light was reflected from the building across the street. The curtain was not pulled high enough to show the sky.

"The Colonel liked me being so dark," Catherine said. "We must get to the sea again. I have to keep it."

“We’ll go there whenever you want.”

“That will be wonderful. Can I tell you something? I have to.”

“What?”

“I didn’t change back to be a girl for lunch. Did I behave all right?”

“You didn’t?”

“No. Do you mind? But now I’m your boy and I’ll do anything for you.”

David continued reading.

“Are you angry?”

“No.” Sobered, he thought.

“It’s simpler now.”

“I don’t think so.”

“Then I’ll be careful. This morning everything I did felt so right and happy, so clean and good in the daylight. Couldn’t I try now and we see?”

“I’d rather you didn’t.”

“Can I kiss you and try?”

“Not if you’re a boy and I’m a boy.”

His chest felt as though there were an iron bar inside it from one side to the other. “I wish you hadn’t told the Colonel.”

“But he saw me, David. He brought it up and he knew all about it and understood. It wasn’t stupid to tell him. It was better. He’s our friend. If I told him he wouldn’t talk. If I didn’t tell him he had a right to.”

“You can’t trust all people like that.”

“I don’t care about people. I only care about you. I’d never make scandals with other people.”

“My chest feels like it is locked in iron.”

“I’m sorry. Mine feels so happy.

“My dearest Catherine.”

“That’s good. You call me Catherine always when you want. I am your Catherine too. I’m always Catherine when you need her.

We'd better go to sleep or should we start and see what happens?"

"Let's first lie very quiet in the dark," David said and lowered the latticed shade and they lay side by side on the bed in the big room in The Palace in Madrid where Catherine had walked in the Museo del Prado in the light of day as a boy and now she would show the dark things in the light and there would, it seemed to him, be no end to the change.

Chapter Eight

In the Buen Retiro in the morning it was as fresh as though it was a forest. It was green and the trunks of the trees were dark and the distances were all new. The lake was not where it had been and when they saw it through the trees it was quite changed.

"You walk ahead," she said. "I want to look at you."

So he turned away from her and walked to where there was a bench and sat down. He could see a lake at a long distance and knew it was too far to ever walk to. He sat there on the bench and she sat down beside him and said, "It's all right."

But remorse had been there to meet him in the Retiro and now it was so bad he told Catherine that he would meet her at the cafe of The Palace.

"Are you all right? Do you want me to come with you?"

"No. I'm all right. I just have to go."

"I'll see you there," she said.

She looked particularly beautiful that morning and she smiled at their secret and he smiled at her and then took his remorse to the cafe. He did not think he would make it but he did and later when Catherine came he was finishing his second absinthe and the remorse was gone.

"How are you, Devil?" he said.

"I'm your devil," she said. "Could I have one of those too?"

The waiter went away pleased to see her looking so handsome and so happy and she said, "What was it?"

"I just felt rotten but I feel fine now."

"Was it that bad?"

“No,” he lied.

She shook her head. “I’m so sorry. I hoped there wouldn’t be any bad at all.”

“It went away.”

‘That’s good. Isn’t it lovely to be here in the summer and no one here? I thought of something.”

“Already?”

“We can stay on and not go to the sea. This is ours now. The town and here. We could stay here and then drive back straight through to la Napoule.”

“There aren’t many more moves to make.”

“Don’t. We’ve only just started.”

“Yes . . . we can always go back where we started.”

“Of course we can and we will.”

“Let’s not talk about it,” he said.

He had felt it start to come back and he took a long sip of his drink.

“It’s a very strange thing,” he said. “This drink tastes exactly like remorse. It has the true taste of it and yet it takes it away.”

“I don’t like you to have to take it for that. We aren’t like that. We mustn’t be.”

“Maybe I am.”

“You mustn’t be.” She took a long sip out of her glass and another long sip and looked around and then at him. “I can do it. Look at me and watch it happen. Here in the outdoor cafe of The Palace in Madrid and you can see the Prado and the street and the sprinklers under the trees so it’s real. It’s awfully brusque. But I can do it. You can see. Look. The lips are your girl again and I’m all the things you really want. Haven’t I done it? Tell me.”

“You didn’t have to.”

“Do you like me as a girl,” she said very seriously and then smiled.

“Yes,” he said.

"That's good," she said. "I'm glad someone likes it because it's a god damned bore."

"Don't do it then."

"Didn't you hear me say I did it? Didn't you watch me do it? Do you want me to wrench myself around and tear myself in two because you can't make up your mind? Because you won't stay with anything?"

"Would you hold it down?"

"Why should I hold it down? You want a girl don't you? Don't you want everything that goes with it? Scenes, hysteria, false accusations, temperament isn't that it? I'm holding it down. I won't make you uncomfortable in front of the waiter. I won't make the waiter uncomfortable. I'll read my damned mail. Can we send up and get my mail?"

"I'll go up and get it."

"No. I shouldn't be here by myself."

"That's right," he said.

"You see? That was why I said to send for it."

"They wouldn't give a *botones* the key to the room. That was why I said I'd go."

"I'm over it," Catherine said. "I'm not going to act that way. Why should I act that way to you? It was ludicrous and undignified. It was so silly I won't even ask you to forgive me. Besides I have to go up to the room anyway."

"Now?"

"Because I'm a god damned woman. I thought if I'd be a girl and stay a girl I'd have a baby at least. Not even that."

"That could be my fault."

"Don't let's ever talk about faults. You stay here and I'll bring back the mail. We'll read our mail and be nice good intelligent American tourists who are disappointed because they came to Madrid at the wrong time of year."

At lunch Catherine said, "We'll go back to la Napoule. There is

no one there and we'll be quiet and good and work and take care of each other. We can drive to Aix too and see all the Cézanne country. We didn't stay there long enough before."

'We'll have a lovely time."

"It isn't too soon for you to start to work again is it?"

"No. It would be good to start now. I'm sure."

"That will be wonderful and I'll study Spanish really for when we come back. And I have so much I have to read."

"We have lots to do."

"We'll do it too."

Book Three

Chapter Nine

The new plan lasted a little more than a month. They had three rooms at the end of the long low rose-colored Provençal house where they had stayed before. It was in the pines on the Estérel side of la Napoule. Out of the windows there was the sea and from the garden in front of the long house where they ate under the trees they could see the empty beaches, the high papyrus grass at the delta of the small river and across the bay was the white curve of Cannes with the hills and the far mountains behind. There was no one staying at the long house now in summer and the proprietor and his wife were pleased to have them back.

Their bedroom was the big room at the end. It had windows on three sides and was cool that summer. At night they smelled the pines and the sea. David worked in a room at the further end. He started early each morning and when he was finished he would find Catherine and they would go to a cove in the rocks where there was a sand beach to sun and to swim. Sometimes Catherine was gone with the car and he would wait for her and have a drink out on the terrace after his work. It was impossible to drink pastis after absinthe and he had taken to drinking whiskey and Perrier water. This pleased the proprietor, who was now doing a good defensive summer business with the presence of the two Bournes in the dead summer season. He had not hired a cook and his wife was doing the cooking. One maid servant looked after the rooms and a nephew, who was an apprentice waiter, served at table.

Catherine enjoyed driving the small car and went on buying and collecting trips to Cannes and to Nice. The big winter season shops

were closed but she found extravagances to eat and solid values to drink and located the places where she could buy books and magazines.

David had worked very hard for four days. They had spent all the afternoon in the sun on the sand of a new cove they had found and they had been in the water until they were both tired and then come home in the evening with salt dried on their backs and in their hair to have a drink and take showers and change.

In bed the breeze came in from the sea. It was cool and they lay side by side in the dark with the sheet over them and Catherine said, “You said I was to tell you.”

“I know.”

She leaned over him and held his head in her hands and kissed him. “I want to so much. Can I? May I?”

“Sure.”

“I’m so happy. I’ve made a lot of plans,” she said. “And this time I’m not going to start so bad and wild.”

“What sort of plans?”

“I can tell but it would be better to show it. We could do it tomorrow. Will you go in with me?”

“Where?”

“To Cannes where I went when we were here before. He’s a very good coiffeur. We’re friends and he’s better than the one in Biarritz because he understood right away.”

“What have you been doing?”

“I went to see him this morning while you were working and I explained and he studied it and understood and thought it would be fine. I told him I hadn’t decided but that if I did I’d try to get you to have yours cut the same way.”

“How is it cut?”

“You’ll see. We’ll go together. It’s sort of bevelled back from the natural line. He’s very enthusiastic. I think it’s because he’s crazy about the Bugatti. Are you afraid?”

"No."

"I can't wait. He wants to lighten it really but we were afraid you might not like it."

"The sun and the salt water lighten it."

"This would be much fairer. He said he could make it as fair as Scandinavian. Think how that would be with our dark skin. And we could make yours lighter too."

"No. I'd feel funny."

"Who do you know here that makes any difference? You'd get lighter swimming all summer anyway."

He did not say anything and she said, "You won't have to. We'll just do mine and maybe you'll want to. We can see."

"Don't make plans, Devil. Tomorrow I'll get up very early and work and you sleep as late as you can."

"Then write for me too," she said. "No matter if it's where I've been bad put in how much I love you."

"I'm nearly up to now."

"Can you publish it or would it be bad to?"

"I've only tried to write it."

"Can I ever read it?"

"If I ever get it right."

"I'm so proud of it already and we won't have any copies for sale and none for reviewers and then there'll never be clippings and you'll never be self-conscious and we'll always have it just for us."

David Bourne woke when it was light and put on shorts and a shirt and went outside. The breeze had died. The sea was calm and the day smelled of the dew and the pines. He walked barefooted across the flagstones of the terrace to the room at the far end of the long house and went in and sat down at the table where he worked. The windows had been open overnight and the room was cool and full of early morning promise.

He was writing about the road from Madrid to Zaragossa and the rising and falling of the road as they came at speed into the country of the red buttes and the little car on the then dusty road

picked up the Express train and Catherine passed it gently car by car, the tender, and then the engineer and fireman, and finally the nose of the engine, and then she shifted as the road switched left and the train disappeared into a tunnel.

"I had it," she had said. "But it went to ground. Tell me if I can get it again."

He had looked at the Michelin map and said, "Not for a while."

"I'll let it go then and we'll see the country." As the road climbed there were poplar trees along the river and the road climbed steeply and he felt the car accept it and then Catherine shift again happily as it flattened the steep grade.

Later, when he heard her voice in the garden, he stopped writing. He locked the suitcase with the cahiers of manuscript and went out locking the door after him. The girl would use the pass key to clean the room.

Catherine was sitting at breakfast on the terrace. There was a red-and-white checked cloth on the table. She wore her old Grau du Roi striped shirt fresh-washed and shrunk now and much faded, new gray flannel slacks, and espadrilles.

"Hello," she said. "I couldn't sleep late."

"You look lovely."

"Thank you. I feel lovely."

"Where did you get those slacks?"

"I had them made in Nice. By a good tailor. Are they all right?"

"They're very well cut. They just look new. Are you going to wear them into town?"

"Not town. Cannes in the off season. Everybody will next year. People are wearing our shirts now. They're no good with skirts. You don't mind do you?"

"Not at all. They look right. They just looked so well creased."

After breakfast while David shaved and showered and then pulled on a pair of old flannels and a fisherman's shirt and found his espadrilles Catherine put on a blue linen shirt with an open

collar and a heavy white linen skirt.

"We're better this way. Even if the slacks are right for here they're too show-off for this morning. We'll save them."
It was very friendly and offhand at the coiffeur's but very professional. Monsieur Jean, who was about David's age and looked more Italian than French, said, "I will cut it as she asks. Do you agree, Monsieur?"

"I don't belong to the syndicate," David said. "I leave it to you two."

"Perhaps we should experiment on Monsieur," Monsieur Jean said. "In case anything goes wrong."

But Monsieur Jean began cutting Catherine's hair very carefully and skillfully and David watched her dark serious face above the smock that came close around her neck. She looked into the hand mirror and watched the comb and scissors lifting and snipping. The man was working like a sculptor, absorbed and serious. "I thought about it all last night and this morning," the coiffeur said. "If you don't believe that, Monsieur, I understand. But this is as important to me as your métier is to you."

He stepped back to look at the shape he was making. Then he snipped more rapidly and finally turned the chair so the big mirror was reflected in the small one Catherine held.

"Do you want it cut that way above the ears?" she asked the coiffeur.

"As you like. I can make it more dégagé if you wish. But it will be beautiful as is if we are going to make it truly fair."

"I want it fair," Catherine said.

He smiled. "Madame and I have spoken of it. But I said it must be Monsieur's decision."

"Monsieur gave his decision," Catherine said. "How fair did Monsieur say he wished it to be?"

"As fair as you can make it," she said.

"Don't say that," Monsieur Jean said. "You must tell me."

"As fair as my pearls," Catherine said. "You've seen them plenty

of times."

David had come over and was watching Monsieur Jean stir a large glassful of the shampoo with a wooden spoon. "I have the shampoos made up with castile soap," the coiffeur said. "It's warm. Please come over here to the basin. Sit forward," he said to Catherine, "and put this cloth across your forehead."

"But it isn't even really a boy's haircut," Catherine said. "I wanted it the way we planned. Everything's going wrong."

"It couldn't be more a boy's haircut. You must believe me."

He was lathering her head now with the foamy thick shampoo with the acrid odor.

'When her head had been shampooed and rinsed again and again it looked to David as though it had no color and the water tunnelled through it showing only a wet paleness. The coiffeur put a towel over it and rubbed it softly. He was very sure about it.

"Don't be desperate, Madame," he said. "Why would I do anything against your beauty?"

"I *am* desperate and there isn't any beauty."

He dried her head gently and then kept the towel over her head and brought a hand blower and began to play it through her hair as he combed it forward.

"Now watch," he said.

As the air drove through her hair it was turning from damp drab to a silvery northern shining fairness. As the wind of the blower moved through it they watched it change.

"You shouldn't have despaired," Monsieur Jean said, not saying *Madame* and then remembering. "Madame wanted it fair?"

"It's better than the pearls," she said. "You're a great man and I was terrible."

Then he rubbed his hands together with something from a jar. "I'll just touch it with this," he said. He smiled at Catherine very happily and passed his hands lightly over her head.

Catherine stood up and looked at herself very seriously in the

mirror. Her face had never been so dark and her hair was like the bark of a young white birch tree.

"I like it so much," she said. "Too much."

She looked in the mirror as though she had never seen the girl she was looking at.

"Now we must do Monsieur," the coiffeur said. "Does Monsieur wish the cut? It's very conservative but it's also sportif."

"The cut," David said. "I don't think I've had a haircut in a month."

"Please make it the same as mine," Catherine said.

"But shorter," David said.

"No. Please just the same."

When it was cut David stood up and ran his hand over his head. It felt cool and comfortable.

"Aren't you going to let him lighten it?"

"No. We've had enough miracles for one day."

"Just a little."

"No."

David looked at Catherine and then at his own face in the mirror. His was as brown as hers and it was her haircut.

"You really want it that much?"

"Yes I do, David. Truly. Just to try it a little bit. Please."

He looked once more in the mirror and walked over then and sat down. The coiffeur looked at Catherine.

"Go ahead and do it," she said.

Chapter Ten

The patron was sitting at one of his tables on the terrace of the long house with a bottle of wine, a glass and an empty coffee cup reading the *Éclaireur de Nice* when the blue car came up in a rush on the gravel and Catherine and David got out and came walking down the flagstones to the terrace. He had not expected them back so soon and he was nearly asleep but he stood up and said the first thing that came in his head as they were opposite him.

"Madame et *Monsieur ont fait décolorer les cheveux. C'est bien."*

"Merci Monsieur. On le fait toujours dans le mois d'août."

"C'ezt. bien. C'est très bien."

"That's nice," said Catherine to David. "We're good clients. What the good client does is très bien. You're très bien. My God you are."

In their room a good sailing breeze was blowing in from the sea and the room was cold.

"I love that blue shirt," David said. "Stand there like that in it."

"It's the color of the car," she said. "Would it look nicer without a skirt?"

"Everything on you looks nicer without a skirt," he said. "I'm going out and see that old goat and be an even better client."

He came back with a bucket of ice and a bottle of the champagne that the proprietor had ordered for them and that they had drunk so seldom and he held two glasses on a small tray in his other hand.

"This ought to be fair warning for them," he said.

"We didn't need it," Catherine said.

"We can just try it. It won't take fifteen minutes to cool."

"Don't tease. Please come to bed and let me see you and feel you."

She was taking his shirt up over his head and he stood up and helped her.

After she was asleep David got up and looked at himself in the bathroom mirror. He picked up a brush and brushed his hair. There was no other way to brush it but the way it had been cut. It would disarrange and muss but it had to fall that way and the color was the same as Catherine's. He went to the door and looked at her on the bed. Then he came back and picked up her big hand mirror.

"So that's how it is," he said to himself. "You've done that to your hair and had it cut the same as your girl's and how do you feel?" He asked the mirror. "How do you feel? Say it."

"You like it," he said.

He looked at the mirror and it was someone else he saw but it was less strange now.

"All right. You like it," he said. "Now go through with the rest of it whatever it is and don't ever say anyone tempted you or that anyone bitched you."

He looked at the face that was no longer strange to him at all but was his face now and said, "You like it. Remember that. Keep that straight. You know exactly how you look now and how you are."

Of course he did not know exactly how he was. But he made an effort aided by what he had seen in the mirror.

They ate dinner on the terrace in front of the long house that night and were very excited and quiet and enjoyed looking at each other in the shaded light on the table. After dinner Catherine said to the boy who had brought their coffee, "Find the pail for the champagne in our room and ice a new bottle please."

"Do we want another?" David asked.

"I think so. Don't you?"

"Sure."

"You don't have to."

"Do you want a *fine*?"

“No. I’d rather drink the wine. Do you have to work tomorrow?”

“We’ll see.”

“Please work if you feel like it.”

“And tonight?”

“We’ll see about tonight. It’s been such an arduous day.”

In the night it was very dark and the wind had risen and they could hear it in the pines.

“David?”

“Yes.”

“How are you girl?”

“I’m fine.”

“Let me feel your hair girl. Who cut it? Was it Jean? It’s cut so full and has so much body and it’s the same as mine. Let me kiss you girl. Oh you have lovely lips. Shut your eyes girl.”

He did not shut his eyes but it was dark in the room and outside the wind was high in the trees.

“You know it isn’t so easy to be a girl if you’re really one. If you really feel things.”

“I know.”

“Nobody knows. I tell you so when you’re my girl. It’s not that you’re insatiable. I’m satiable so easily. It’s just some feel and others don’t. People lie about it I think. But it’s so nice just to feel and hold you. I’m so happy. Just be my girl and love me the way I love you. Love me more. The way you can now. You now. Yes you. Please you.”

They were dropping down the slope toward Cannes and the wind was heavy as they came onto the plain and skirted the deserted beaches, the tall grass bending and flattening as they crossed the bridge over the river and picked up speed on the last stretch of fast road before the town. David found the bottle, which was cold and wrapped in a towel, and took a long drink and felt the car leave the work behind and move away and up the small rise the black road was making. He had not worked this morning and now when she had driven them through the town and back into the country, he uncorked the bottle and drank again and offered it to her.

“I don’t need it,” Catherine said. “I feel too good.”

“Very well.”

They passed Golfe-Juan with the good bistro and the small open bar and then were through the pine woods and moving along the raw yellow beach of Juan-les-Pins. They crossed the small peninsula on the fast black road and passed through Antibes driving beside the railway and then out through the town and beyond the port and the square tower of the old defenses and came out again into open country. “It never lasts,” she said. “I always eat that stretch too fast.”

They stopped and ate lunch in the lee of an old stone wall that was part of the ruin of some building hard by the side of a clear stream that came out of the mountains and crossed the wild plain on its way to the sea. The wind came hard out of a funnel in the mountains. They had spread a blanket on the ground and they sat close together against the wall and looked out across the waste country to the sea that was flat and scoured by the wind.

“It wasn’t must of a place to come to,” Catherine said. “I don’t know what I thought it would be like.”

They stood up and looked up at the hills with their poised villages and the gray and purple mountains behind. The wind whipped in their hair and Catherine pointed out a road that she had once driven into the high country.

“We could have gone somewhere up in there,” she said. “But it’s so closed in and picturesque. I hate those hanging villages.”

“This is a good place,” David said. “It’s a fine stream and we couldn’t have a better wall.”

“You’re being nice. You don’t have to be.”

“It’s a good lee and I like the place. We’ll turn our back on all the picturesque.”

They ate stuffed eggs, roast chicken, pickles, fresh long bread that they broke in pieces and spread Sovora mustard on and they drank rosé.

"Do you feel good now?" Catherine asked.

"Sure."

"And you haven't felt bad?"

"No."

"Not even about anything I said?"

David took a drink of the wine and said, "No. I haven't thought about it."

She stood up and looked into the wind so that it blew her sweater against her breasts and whipped her hair and then she looked down at him with her black brown face and smiled. She turned around then and looked out toward the sea that was flattened and wrinkled by the wind.

"Let's go get the papers in Cannes and read them in the cafe," she said.

"You want to show off."

"Why shouldn't I? It's the first time we've been out together. Do you mind if we do?"

"No, Devil. Why would I?"

"I didn't want to if you didn't."

"You said you wanted to."

"I want to do what you want. I can't be more compliant than that can I?"

"Nobody wants you to be compliant."

"Can we stop it? All I wanted to be was good today. Why spoil everything?"

"Let's clean up here and go."

"Where?"

"Anywhere. The god damn cafe."

They bought the papers in Cannes and a new French *Vogue,* the *Chasseur Français* and the *Miroir des Sports* and sat at a table in front of the cafe out of the wind and read and had their drinks and were friends again. David drank Haig pinch bottle and Perrier and Catherine had Armagnac and Perrier.

Two girls who had driven up and parked on the street came over

to the cafe and sat down and ordered a Chambery Cassis and a *fine à l' eau.* It was the beauty of the two who took the brandy and soda.

"Who are those two?" Catherine said. "Do you know?"

"I've never seen them."

"I have. They must live around here somewhere. I saw them in Nice."

"The one girl's handsome," David said. "She has fine legs too."

"They're sisters," Catherine said. "They're both nice looking really."

"But the one's a beauty. They're not Americans."

The two girls were arguing and Catherine said to David, "It's a big row, I think."

"How did you know they were sisters?"

"I thought they were in Nice. Now I'm not sure. The car has Swiss plates."

"It's an old Isotta."

"Should we wait and see what happens? We haven't seen any drama for a long time."

"I think it's just a big Italian row."

"It must be getting serious because it's quieter."

"It will flare up. The one is a damned handsome girl."

"Yes, she is. And here she comes over."

David stood up.

"I'm sorry," the girl said in English. "Please forgive me. Please sit down," she said to David.

"Will you sit down?" Catherine asked.

"I shouldn't. My friend is furious with me. But I told her you would understand. You will forgive me?"

"Should we forgive her?" Catherine said to David.

"Let's forgive her."

"I knew you would understand," the girl said. "It's only to tell me where you had your hair cut." She blushed. "Or is it like copying a dress? My friend said it was more offensive."

“I’ll write it down for you,” Catherine said.

“I’m very ashamed,” the girl said. “You are not offended?”

“Of course not,” Catherine said. “Would you have a drink with us?”

“I shouldn’t. May I ask my friend?”

She went back to her table for a moment and there was a short and vicious low-pitched exchange.

“My friend regrets very much but she cannot come over,” the girl said. “But I hope we will meet again. You have been so very kind.”

“How about that?” Catherine said when the girl had gone back to her friend. “For on a windy day.”

“She’ll be back to ask where you had your slacks cut.”

The row was still going on at the other table. Then the two of them stood up and came over.

“May I present my friend the—”

“I am Nina.”

“Our name is Bourne,” David said. “How very pleasant of you to join us.”

“You were very nice to let us come over,” the handsome one said. “It was an impudent thing to do.” She blushed.

“It’s very flattering,” Catherine said. “But he’s a very good coiffeur.”

“He must be,” the handsome one said. She had a breathless way of speaking and she blushed again. “We saw you in Nice,” she said to Catherine. “I wanted to speak to you then. I mean ask you.”

She can’t blush again, David thought. But she did.

“Who’s going to have their hair cut?” Catherine asked.

“I am,” the handsome one said.

“I am too, stupid,” Nina said.

“You said you weren’t.”

“I changed my mind.”

“I *really am*,” the handsome one said. “We must go now. Do you

come here to this cafe?"

"Sometimes," Catherine said.

"I hope we'll see you sometime then," the handsome one said. "Goodbye and thank you for being so gracious."

The two girls went to their table and Nina called the waiter and they paid and were gone.

"They're not Italian," David said. "The one is nice but she could make you nervous blushing."

"She's in love with you."

"Sure. She saw *me* in Nice."

"Well I can't help it if she is with me. It isn't the first girl that ever was and a lot of good it did them."

"How about Nina?"

"That bitch," Catherine said.

"She was a wolf. I suppose it should be amusing."

"I didn't think it was amusing," Catherine said. "I thought it was sad."

"So did I."

"We'll find another cafe," she said. "They're gone now anyway."

"They were spooky."

"I know," she said. "For me too. But the one girl was nice. She had beautiful eyes. Did you see?"

"She was an awful blusher though."

"I liked her. Didn't you?"

"I suppose so."

"People that can't blush are worthless."

"Nina blushed once," David said.

"I could be awfully rude to Nina."

"It wouldn't touch her."

"No. She's well armored."

"Do you want another drink before we go home?"

"I don't need one. But you have one."

"I don't need one."

“Have another. You usually have two in the evening. I’ll take a small one to keep company.”

“No. Let’s go home.”

In the night he woke and heard the wind high and wild and turned and pulled the sheet over his shoulder and shut his eyes again. He felt her breathing and shut his eyes again. He felt her breathing softly and regularly and then he went back to sleep.

Chapter Eleven

It was the second day of the wind and it had not slackened. He left the ongoing narrative of their journey where it was to write a story that had come to him four or five days before and had been developing, probably, he thought, in the last two nights while he had slept. He knew it was bad to interrupt any work he was engaged in but he felt confident and sure of how well he was going and he thought he could leave the longer narrative and write the story which he believed he must write now or lose.

The story started with no difficulty as a story does when it is ready to be written and he got past the middle of it and knew he should break off and leave it until the next day. If he could not keep away from it after he had taken a break he would drive through and finish it. But he hoped he could keep away from it and hit it fresh the next day. It was a good story and now he remembered how long he had intended to write it. The story had not come to him in the past few days. His memory had been inaccurate in that. It was the necessity to write it that had come to him. He knew how the story ended now. He had always known the wind and sand-scoured bones but they were gone now and he was inventing all of it. It was all true now because it happened to him as he wrote and only its bones were dead and scattered and behind him. It started now with the evil in the shamba and he had to write it and he was very well into it.

He was tired and happy from his work when he found Catherine's note that she had not wanted to disturb him, had gone out and would be back for lunch. He left the room and ordered

breakfast and, as he waited for it, Monsieur Aurol, the proprietor, came in and they spoke about the weather. Monsieur Aurol said the wind came this way sometimes. It was not a true mistral, the season guaranteed that, but it would probably blow for three days. The weather was insane now. Monsieur had undoubtedly noticed that. If anyone kept track of it they would know that it had not been normal since the war.

David said he had not been able to keep track of it because he had been travelling but there was no doubt that the weather was strange. Not only the weather, said Monsieur Aurol, everything was changed and what was not changed was changing fast. It might very well all be for the best and he, for one, did not oppose it. Monsieur, as a man of the world, probably saw it in the same way.

Undoubtedly, said David, seeking for a decisive and terminal idiocy, it was necessary to review the *cadres.*

Precisely, said Monsieur Aurol.

They left it at that and David finished his café crème and read the *Miroir des Sports* and began to miss Catherine. He went into the room and found *Far Away and Long Ago* and came out onto the terrace and settled himself in the sun by the table out of the wind to read the lovely book. Catherine had sent to Galignani's in Paris for the Dent edition for a present for him and when the books had come they had made him feel truly rich. The figures in his bank balances, the franc and dollar accounts, had, ever since Grau du Roi, seemed completely unreal and he had never considered them as actual money. But the books of W. H. Hudson had made him feel rich and when he told Catherine this she was very pleased.

After he had read an hour he started to miss Catherine very badly and he found the boy who served at table and asked him to bring a whiskey and Perrier. Later he had another. It was well past lunch when he heard the car come up the hill.

They came along the walk and he heard their voices. They were excited and happy, then the girl was suddenly silent, and Catherine

said, “Look who I brought to see you.”

“Please, I know I should not have come,” the girl said. It was the dark handsome one of the two they had met at the cafe yesterday; the one who blushed.

“How are you?” David said. She had evidently been to the coiffeur’s and her hair had been cropped short the way Catherine’s had been at Biarritz. “I see you found the place.”

The girl blushed and looked at Catherine for courage. “Look at her,” Catherine said. “Go muss her head up.”

“Oh Catherine,” the girl said. Then she said to David, “You can if you want.”

“Don’t be frightened,” he said. “What do you think you’ve got into?”

“I don’t know,” she said. “I’m just so happy to be here.”

“Where have you two been?” David asked Catherine.

“Jean’s of course. Then we just stopped and had a drink and I asked Marita if she’d come to lunch. Aren’t you glad to see us?”

“I’m delighted. Will you have another drink?”

“Would you make martinis?” Catherine asked. “One won’t hurt you,” she said to the girl.

“No please. I have to drive.”

“Do you want a sherry?”

“No please.”

David went behind the bar and found glasses and some ice and made two martinis.

“I’ll taste yours if I may,” the girl said to him.

“You’re not afraid of him now are you?” Catherine asked her.

“Not at all,” the girl said. She blushed again. “It tastes very good but terribly strong.”

“They are strong,” David said. “But there’s a strong wind today and we drink according to the wind.”

“Oh,” said the girl. “Do all Americans do that?”

“Only the oldest families,” Catherine said. “Us, the Morgans, the Woolworths, the Jelkses, the Jukeses. You know.”

“It’s rugged in the blizzards and in hurricane months,” David said. “Sometimes I wonder if we’ll get through the autumnal equinox.”

“I’d like to have one sometime when I didn’t have to drive,” the girl said.

“You don’t have to drink because we do,” Catherine said. “And don’t mind that we make jokes all the time. Look at her David. Aren’t you glad I brought her?”

“I love it that you make jokes,” the girl said. “You must forgive me that I’m so happy to be here.”

“You were nice to come,” David said.

When they were at lunch in the dining room out of the wind, David asked, “What about your friend Nina?”

“She’s gone away.”

“She was handsome,” David said.

“Yes. We had a very big fight and she went away.”

“She was a bitch,” Catherine said. “But then I think almost everyone is a bitch.”

“Usually they are,” the girl said. “I always hope not but they are.”

“I know plenty of women who aren’t bitches,” David said.

“Yes. You would,” the girl said.

“Was Nina happy?” Catherine asked.

“I hope she will be happy,” the girl said. “Happiness in intelligent people is the rarest thing I know.”

“You haven’t had such a long time to find out about it.”

“If you make mistakes you find out faster,” the girl said.

“You’ve been happy all morning,” Catherine said. “We had a wonderful time.”

“You don’t need to tell me,” the girl said. “And I’m happier now than I can remember ever.”

Later, over salad David asked the girl, “Are you staying far from here along the coast?”

“I don’t think I’m staying.”

“Really? That’s too bad,” he said and felt the tension come to the table and draw taut as a hawser. He looked from the girl with her eyelashes down so they touched her cheeks to Catherine and she looked at him very straight and said, “She was going back to Paris and I said why not stay here if Aural has a room? Come on up to lunch and see if David likes you and if you like the place. David do you like her?”

“It’s not a club,” David said. “It’s a hotel.” Catherine looked away and he moved fast to help her, going on as though it had not been stated. “We like you very much and I’m sure Aurol has room. He should be delighted to have someone else here.”

The girl sat at the table with her eyes down. “I think I’d better not.”

“Please stay a few days,” Catherine said. “David and I would both love to have you. I’ve no one here to keep me company while he works. We’d have good times the way we did this morning. Tell her David.”

The hell with her, David thought. Fuck her.

“Don’t be silly,” he said. “Call Monsieur Aurol please,” he told the boy who served. “We’ll find out about a room.”

“You won’t mind truly?” the girl asked.

“We wouldn’t have asked you if we minded,” David said. “We like you and you’re very decorative.”

“I’ll be useful if I can,” the girl said. “I hope I’ll find out how to be.”

“Be happy the way you were when you came in,” David told her. “That’s useful.”

“I am now,” the girl said. “I wish I’d taken the martini now that I don’t have to drive.”

“You can have one tonight,” Catherine said.

“That will be lovely. Can we go and see the rooms now and get it over with?”

David had driven her down to retrieve the big old Isotta convertible and her bags from where the car had been parked in front of the cafe in Cannes.

On the way she said, “Your wife is wonderful and I’m in love with her.”

She was sitting beside him and David did not look to see if she blushed.

“I’m in love with her too,” he said.

“I’m in love with you also,” she said. “Is that all right?”

He dropped his arm and closed his hand on her shoulder and she leaned close against him.

“We’ll have to see about that,” he said.

“I’m glad I’m smaller.”

“Smaller than who?”

“Catherine,” she said.

“That’s a hell of a thing to say,” he said.

“I mean I thought you might like someone of my size. Or do you only care for tall girls?”

“Catherine’s not a tall girl.”

“Of course not. I only meant that I was not as tall.”

“Yes and you’re very dark too.”

“Yes. We’ll look well together.”

“Who will?”

“Catherine and I and you and I.”

“We’ll have to.”

“What does that mean?”

“I mean we can’t escape looking well together can we, if we look well and we are together?”

“We’re together now.”

“No.” He was driving with only one hand on the wheel, leaning back and looking up the road ahead at the juncture with the N.7.

She had put her hand on him. “We’re just riding in the same car,” he said.

“But I can feel that you like me.”

“Yes. I’m very reliable that way but it doesn’t mean a thing.”

“It does mean something.”

“Just what it says.”

“It’s a very nice thing to say,” she said and did not say anything more nor take her hand away until they had turned at the Boulevard and pulled up behind the old Isotta Fraschini parked in front of the cafe under the old trees. Then she had smiled at him and got out of the small blue car.

Now, at the hotel in the pines that were still being blown by the wind, David and Catherine were alone in their room after she finally came in from settling the girl in the two rooms that she had taken.

“I think she’ll be comfortable,” Catherine said. “Of course the best room beside our own is the one at the far end where you work.”

“And I’m going to keep it,” David said. “I’m going damn well and I won’t change my work room for an imported bitch!”

“Why are you being so violent?” Catherine said. “No one asked you to give it up. I just said it was the best. But the two next door to it work out very well.”

“Who is this girl anyway?”

“Don’t be so violent. She’s a nice girl and I like her. I know it was unforgivable to bring her up without speaking to you and I’m sorry. But I did it and it’s done. I thought you’d like to have someone pleasant and attractive for me to have as a friend to go around with while you’re working.”

“I do if you want someone.”

“I didn’t *want* someone. I just ran into someone that I liked and thought you would like and it would be pleasant for her to be here for a little while.”

"But who is she?"

"I haven't examined her papers. You interrogate her if you need to."

"Well, she's decorative at least. But whose girl is she?"

"Don't be rough. She's nobody's."

"Tell me straight."

"All right. She's in love with us both unless I'm crazy."

"You're not crazy."

"Not yet maybe."

"So what's the drill?"

"I wouldn't know," Catherine said.

"I wouldn't either."

"It's sort of strange and fun."

"I wouldn't know," David said. "Do you want to go to swim? We missed it yesterday."

"Let's swim. Should we ask her? It would only be polite."

"We'd have to wear suits."

"It wouldn't matter with this wind. It's no day to be on the sand to tan."

"I hate to wear suits with you."

"Me too. But maybe tomorrow the wind will be over."

Then on the Estérel road with David driving the big old Isotta, feeling and condemning the too sudden brakes and finding how badly the motor needed to be worked over, the three of them sat together and Catherine said, "There are two or three different coves where we swim without suits when we're alone. That's the only way to get really dark."

"It's not a good day to tan," David said. "It's too windy."

"We can swim though without suits if you like," Catherine said to the girl. "If David doesn't mind. It might be fun."

"I'd love to," the girl said. "Do you mind?" she asked David.

In the evening David made martinis and the girl said, "Is everything always as wonderful as it has been today?"

“It’s been a pleasant day,” David said. Catherine had not yet come out from their room and he and the girl were sitting in front of the small bar M. Aurol had installed the previous winter in the corner of the big Provençal room.

“When I drink I want to say things I should never say,” the girl said.

“Then don’t say them.”

“Then what’s the use of drinking?”

“It isn’t these. You’ve only had one.”

“Were you embarrassed when we swam?”

“No. Should I have been?”

“No,” she said. “I loved to see you.”

“That’s good,” he said. “How’s the martini?”

“It’s very strong but I like it. Did you and Catherine never swim before like that with anyone?”

“No. Why should we?”

“I’ll get really brown.”

“I’m sure you will.”

“Would you rather I was not so deeply brown?”

“You’re a nice color. Get that color all over if you like.”

“I thought perhaps you’d like one of your girls lighter than the other.”

“You’re not my girl.”

“I am,” she said. “I told you before.”

“You don’t blush anymore.”

“I got over it when we went bathing. I hope I won’t now for a long time. That’s why I said everything—to get over it. That’s why I told you.”

“You look nice in that cashmere sweater,” David said.

“Catherine said we’d both wear them. You don’t dislike me because I told you?”

“I forget what you told me.”

“That I love you.”

“Don’t talk rot.”

“Don’t you believe it happens to people like that? The way it happened to me about you two?”

“You don’t fall in love with two people at once.”

“You don’t know,” she said.

“It’s rot,” he said. “It’s just a way of talking.”

“It isn’t at all. It’s true.”

“You just think it is. It’s nonsense.”

“All right,” she said. “It’s nonsense. But I’m here.”

“Yes. You’re here,” he said. He was watching Catherine as she crossed the room, smiling and happy.

“Hello swimmers,” she said. “Oh what a shame. I didn’t get to see Marita have her first martini.”

“This is still it,” the girl said.

“How did it affect her, David?”

“Made her talk rot.”

“We’ll start with a fresh one. Weren’t you good to resuscitate this bar. It’s such a sort of tentative bar. We’ll get a mirror for it. A bar’s no good without a mirror.”

“We can get one tomorrow,” the girl said. “I’d like to get it.”

“Don’t be rich,” Catherine said. “We’ll both get it and then we can all see each other when we talk rot and know how rotty it is. You can’t fool a bar mirror.”

“It’s when I start looking quizzical in one that I know I’ve lost,” David said.

“You never lose. How can you lose with two girls?” Catherine said.

“I tried to tell him,” the girl said and blushed for the first time that evening.

“She’s your girl and I’m your girl,” Catherine said. “Now stop being stuffy and be nice to your girls. Don’t you like the way they look? I’m the very fair one you married.”

“You’re darker and fairer than the one I married.”

“So are you and I brought you a dark girl for a present. Don’t you like your present?”

“I like my present very much.”

“How do you like your future?”

“I don’t know about my future.”

“It isn’t a dark future is it?” the girl asked.

“Very good,” Catherine said. “She’s not only beautiful and rich and healthy and affectionate. She can make jokes. Aren’t you pleased with what I brought you?”

“I’d rather be a dark present than a dark future,” the girl said.

“She did it again,” Catherine said. “Give her a kiss David and make her a fair present.”

David put his arm around the girl and kissed her and she started to kiss him and turned her head away. Then she was crying with her head down and both hands holding the bar.

“Make a good joke now,” David said to Catherine.

“I’m all right,” the girl said. “Don’t look at me. I’m all right.”

Catherine put her arm around her and kissed her and stroked her head.

“I’ll be all right,” the girl said. “Please, I know I’ll be all right.”

“I’m so sorry,” Catherine said.

“Let me go please,” the girl said. “I have to go.”

“Well,” David said when the girl was gone and Catherine had come back to the bar.

“You don’t need to say it,” Catherine said. “I’m sorry David.”

“She’ll be back.”

“You don’t think it’s all a fake now do you?”

“They were real tears if that’s what you mean.”

“Don’t be stupid. You aren’t stupid.”

“I kissed her very carefully.”

“Yes. On the mouth.”

“Where did you expect me to kiss her?”

“You were all right. I haven’t criticized you.”

“I’m glad you didn’t ask me to kiss her when we were at the beach.”

“I thought of it,” Catherine said. She laughed and it was like the old days before anyone had mixed in their life. “Did you think I was going to?”

“I thought you were so I dove in.”

“Good thing you did.”

They laughed again.

“Well, we’ve cheered up,” Catherine said.

“Thank God,” David said. “I love you, Devil, and really I didn’t kiss her to make all that.”

“You don’t have to tell me,” Catherine said. “I saw you. It was a miserable effort.”

“I wish she’d go away.”

“Don’t be heartless,” Catherine said. “And I did encourage her.”

“I tried not to.”

“I egged her on about you. I’ll go out and find her.”

“No. Wait a little while. She’s too sure of herself.”

“How can you say that, David? You just broke her all up.”

“I did not.”

“Well something did. I’m going to go and get her.”

But it wasn’t necessary because the girl came back to the bar where they were standing and blushed and said, “I’m sorry.” Her face was washed and she had brushed her hair and she came up to David and kissed him on the mouth very quickly and said, “I like my present. Did someone take my drink?”

“I threw it out,” Catherine said. “David will make a new one.”

“I hope you still like having two girls,” she said. “Because I am yours and I’m going to be Catherine’s too.”

“I don’t go in for girls,” Catherine said. It was very quiet and her voice did not sound right either to herself or to David.

“Don’t you ever?”

“I never have.”

“I can be your girl, if you ever want one, and David’s too.”

“Don’t you think that’s sort of a vast undertaking?” Catherine asked.

“That’s why I came here,” the girl said. “I thought that was what you wanted.”

“I’ve never had a girl,” Catherine said.

“I’m so stupid,” the girl said. “I didn’t know. Is it true? You’re not making fun of me?”

“I’m not making fun of you.”

“I don’t know how I could be so stupid,” the girl said. She means *mistaken* David thought and Catherine thought it too.

That night in bed Catherine said, “I never should have let you in for any of it. Not for any part of it.”

“I wish we’d never seen her.”

“It might have been something worse. Maybe to go through with it and get rid of it that way is best.”

“You could send her away.”

“I don’t think that’s the way to clear it now. Doesn’t she do anything to you?”

“Oh sure.”

“I knew she did. But I love you and all this is nothing. You know it is too.”

“I don’t know about it, Devil.”

“Well we won’t be solemn. I can already tell it’s death if you’re solemn.”

Chapter Twelve

It was the third day of the wind but it was not as heavy now and he sat at the table and read the story over from the start to where he had left off, correcting as he read. He went on with the story, living in it and nowhere else, and when he heard the voices of the two girls outside he did not listen. When they went by the window he lifted his hand and waved. They waved and the dark girl smiled and Catherine put her fingers to her lips. The girl looked very pretty in the morning, her face shining and her color high. Catherine was beautiful as always. He heard the car start and noted it was the Bugatti. He went back into the story. It was a good story and he finished it shortly before noon.

It was too late to have breakfast and he was tired after working and did not want to drive the old Isotta into town with its bad brakes and huge malfunctioning motor although the key was with a note Catherine had left saying they had gone to Nice and would look in at the cafe for him on their way home.

What I would like, he thought, is a tall cold liter of beer in a thick heavy glass and a *pomme à l'huile* with coarse ground peppercorns on it. But the beer on this coast was worthless and he thought happily of Paris and other places he had been and was pleased he had written something he knew was good and that he had finished it. This was the first writing he had finished since they were married. Finishing is what you have to do, he thought. If you don't finish, nothing is worth a damn. Tomorrow I'll pick up the narrative where I left it and keep right on until I finish it. And how are you going to finish it? How are you going to finish it now?

As soon as he started to think beyond his work, everything that he had locked out by the work came back to him. He thought of the night before and of Catherine and the girl today on the road that he and Catherine had driven two days before and he felt sick. They should be on the way back now. It's afternoon. Maybe they're at the cafe. Don't be solemn, she had said. But she meant something else too. Maybe she knows what she's doing. Maybe she knows how it can turn out. Maybe she does know. You don't.

So you worked and now you worry. You'd better write another story. Write the hardest one there is to write that you know. Go ahead and do that. You have to last yourself if you're to be any good to her. What good have you been to her? Plenty, he said. No, not plenty. Plenty means enough. Go ahead and start the new one tomorrow. The hell with tomorrow. What a way to be. *Tomorrow.* Go in and start it now.

He put the note and the key in his pocket and went back into the work room and sat down and wrote the first paragraph of the new story that he had always put off writing since he had known what a story was. He wrote it in simple declarative sentences with all of the problems ahead to be lived through and made to come alive. The very beginning was written and all he had to do was go on. That's all, he said. You see how simple what you cannot do is? Then he came out onto the terrace and sat down and ordered a whiskey and Perrier.

The proprietor's young nephew brought the bottles and ice and a glass from the bar and said, "Monsieur had no breakfast."

"I worked too long."

"C'est dommage," the boy said. "Can I bring anything? A sandwich?"

"In our storeroom you will find a tin of Maquereau Vin Blanc Capitaine Cook. Open it up and bring me two on a plate."

"They won't be cold."

"It makes no difference. Bring them."

He sat and ate the maquereau vin blanc and drank the whiskey and mineral water. It did make a difference that they were not cold. He read the morning paper while he ate.

We always ate fresh fish at le Grau du Roi, he thought, but that was a long time ago. He started to remember Grau du Roi and then he heard the car coming up the hill.

"Take this away," he said to the boy and he stood up and walked into the bar and poured himself a whiskey, put ice in it and filled the glass with Perrier. The taste of the wine-spiced fish was in his mouth and he picked up the bottle of mineral water and drank from it.

He heard their voices and then they came in the door as happy and gay as yesterday. He saw Catherine's birch bright head and her dark face loving and excited and the other girl dark, the wind still in her hair, her eyes very bright and then suddenly shy again as she came closer.

"We didn't stop when we saw you weren't at the cafe," Catherine said.

"I worked late. How are you, Devil?"

"I'm very well. Don't ask me how this one is."

"Did you work well, David?" the girl asked.

"That's being a good wife," Catherine said. "I forgot to ask."

"What did you do in Nice?"

"Can we have a drink and then tell?"

They were close to him on each side and he felt them both.

"Did you work well, David?" she asked again.

"Of course he did," Catherine said. "That's the only way he ever works, stupid."

"Did you, David?"

"Yes," he said and rumpled her head. "Thanks."

"Don't we get a drink?" Catherine asked. "We didn't work at all. We just bought things and ordered things and made scandal."

"We didn't make any real scandal."

“I don’t know,” Catherine said. “I don’t care either.”

“What was the scandal?” David asked.

“It wasn’t anything,” the girl said.

“I didn’t mind it,” Catherine said. “I liked it.”

“Someone said something about her slacks in Nice.”

“That’s not a scandal,” David said. “It’s a big town. You had to expect that if you went there.”

“Do I look any different?” Catherine asked. “I wish they’d brought the mirror. Do I look any different to you?”

“No.” David looked at her. She looked very blond and disheveled and darker than ever and very excited and defiant.

“That’s good,” she said. “Because I tried it.”

“You didn’t do anything,” the girl said.

“I did and I liked it and I want another drink.”

“She didn’t do anything, David,” the girl said.

“This morning I stopped the car on the long clear stretch and kissed her and she kissed me and on the way back from Nice too and when we got out of the car just now.” Catherine looked at him lovingly but rebelliously and then said, “It was fun and I liked it. You kiss her too. The boy’s not here.”

David turned to the girl and she clung to him suddenly and they kissed. He had not meant to kiss her and he had not known it would be like this when he did it.

“That’s enough,” Catherine said.

“How are you?” David said to the girl. She was shy and happy again.

“I’m happy the way you said to be,” the girl told him.

“Everybody is happy now,” Catherine said. “We’ve shared all the guilt.”

They had a very good lunch and drank cold Tavel through the hors d’oeuvres, the poulet and the ratatouille, the salad and the fruit and cheese. They were all hungry and they made jokes and no one was solemn.

“There’s a terrific surprise for dinner or before,” Catherine said. “She spends money like a drunken oil-lease Indian, David.”

“Are they nice?” the girl asked. “Or are they like Maharajas?”

“David will tell you about them. He comes from Oklahoma.”

“I thought he came from East Africa.”

“No. Some of his ancestors escaped from Oklahoma and took him to East Africa when he was very young.”

“It must have been very exciting.”

“He wrote a novel about being in East Africa when he was a boy.”

“I know.”

“You read it?” David asked her.

“I did,” she said. “Do you want to ask me about it?”

“No,” he said. “I’m familiar with it.”

“It made me cry,” the girl said. “Was that your father in it?”

“Some ways.”

“You must have loved him very much.”

“I did.”

“You never talked to me about him,” Catherine said.

“You never asked me.”

“Would you have?”

“No,” he said.

“I loved the book,” the girl said.

“Don’t overreach,” Catherine said.

“I wasn’t.”

“When you kissed him—”

“You asked me to.”

“What I wanted to say when you interrupted,” Catherine said, “was did you think of him as a writer when you kissed him and liked it so much?”

David poured a glass of Tavel and drank some of it.

“I don’t know,” the girl said. “I didn’t think.”

“I’m glad,” Catherine said. “I was afraid it was going to be like

the clippings."

The girl looked really mystified and Catherine explained, "The press cuttings about the second book. He's written two you know."

"I only read *The Rift.*"

"The second one is about flying. In the war. It's the only good thing anyone ever wrote about flying."

"Balls," David said.

"Wait until you read it," Catherine said. "It's a book you had to die to write and you had to be completely destroyed. Don't ever think I don't know about his books just because I don't think he's a writer when I kiss him."

"I think we ought to take a siesta," David said. "You ought to take a nap, Devil. You're tired."

"I talked too much," Catherine said. "It was a nice lunch and I'm sorry if I talked too much and boasted."

"I loved you when you talked about the books," the girl said. "You were admirable."

"I don't feel admirable. I am tired," Catherine said. "Have you plenty to read, Marita?"

"I have two books still," the girl said. "Later I'll borrow some if I may."

"May I come and see you later?"

"If you want," the girl said.

David did not look at the girl and she did not look at him.

"I won't disturb you?" Catherine said.

"Nothing that I do is important," the girl said.

Catherine and David lay side by side on the bed in their room with the wind blowing its last day outside and it was not like siesta in the old days.

"Can I tell you now?"

"I'd rather skip it."

"No, let me tell. This morning when I started the car I was frightened and I tried to drive very well and I felt hollow inside.

Then I could see Cannes up ahead on the hill and the road was clear all up ahead by the sea and I looked behind and it was clear and I pulled out from the road into the brush. Where it's like the sagebrush. I kissed her and she kissed me and we sat in the car and I felt very strange and then we drove into Nice and I don't know whether people could tell it or not. I didn't care by then and we went everywhere and bought everything. She loves to buy things. Someone made a rude remark but it was nothing really. Then we stopped on the way home and she said it was better if I was her girl and I said I didn't care either way and really I was glad because I am a girl now anyway and I didn't know what to do. I never felt so not knowing ever. But she's nice and she wanted to help me I think. I don't know. Anyway she was nice and I was driving and she was so pretty and happy and she was just gentle the way we are sometimes or me to you or either of us and I said I couldn't drive if she did that so we stopped. I only kissed her but I know it happened with me. So we were there for a while and then I drove straight home. I kissed her before we came in and we were happy and I liked it and I still like it."

"So now you've done it," David said carefully, "and you're through with it."

"But I'm not. I liked it and I'm going to really do it."

"No. You don't have to."

"I do and I'm going to do it until I'm through with it and I'm over it."

"Who says you'll be over it?"

"I do. But I really have to, David. I didn't know I'd ever be like this."

He did not say anything.

"I'll be back," she said. "I know I'll get over it as well as I know anything. Please trust me."

He did not say anything.

"She's waiting for me. Didn't you hear me ask her? It's like

stopping in the middle of anything."

"I'm going up to Paris," David said. "You can reach me through the bank."

"No," she said. "No. You have to help me."

"I can't help you."

"You can. You can't go away. I couldn't stand it if you went away. I don't want to be with her. It's only something that I have to do. Can't you understand? Please understand. You always understand."

"Not this part."

"Please try. You always understood before. You know you did. Everything. Didn't you?"

"Yes. Before."

"It started with us and there'll only be us when I get this finished. I'm not in love with anyone else."

"Don't do it."

"I have to. Ever since I went to school all I ever had was chances to do it and people wanting to do it with me. And I never would and never did. But now I have to."

He said nothing.

"Please know how it is." He did not say anything.

"Anyway she's in love with you and you can have her and wash everything away that way."

"You're talking crazy, Devil."

"I know it," she said. "I'll stop."

"Take a nap," he said. "Just lie close and quiet and we'll both go to sleep."

"I love you so," she said. "And you're my true partner the way I told her. I've told her too much about you but that's all she likes to talk about. I'm quiet now so I'm going to go."

"No. Don't."

"Yes," she said. "You wait for me. I won't be very long."

When she came back to the room David was not there and she stood

a long time and looked at the bed and then went to the bathroom door and opened it and stood and looked in the long mirror. Her face had no expression and she looked at herself from her head down to her feet with no expression on her face at all. The light was nearly gone when she went into the bathroom and shut the door behind her.

Chapter Thirteen

David drove up from Cannes in the dusk. The wind had fallen and he left the car in the usual place and walked up the path to where the light came out onto the patio and the garden. Marita came out of the doorway and walked toward him.

"Catherine feels terribly," she said. "Please be kind to her."

"The hell with both of you," David said.

"With me, yes. But not with her. You mustn't, David."

"Don't tell me what I must and what I mustn't."

"Don't you want to take care of her?"

"Not particularly."

"I do."

"You certainly have."

"Don't be a fool," she said. "You're not a fool. I tell you this is serious."

"Where is she?"

"In there waiting for you."

David went in the door. Catherine was sitting at the empty bar.

"Hello," she said. "They didn't bring the mirror."

"Hello, Devil," he said. "I'm sorry I was late."

He was shocked at the dead way she looked and at her toneless voice.

"I thought you'd gone away," she said.

"Didn't you see I hadn't taken anything?"

"I didn't look. You wouldn't need to take anything to go away."

"No," David said. "I just went into town."

"Oh," she said and looked at the wall.

“The wind’s dropping,” he said. “It will be a good day tomorrow.”

“I don’t care about tomorrow.”

“Sure you do.”

“No I don’t. Don’t ask me to.”

“I won’t ask you to,” he said. “Have you had a drink?”

“No.”

“I’ll make one.”

“It won’t do any good.”

“It might. We’re still us.” He was making the drink and she watched him mechanically as he stirred and then poured into the glasses.

“Put in the garlic olive,” she said.

He handed her one of the glasses and lifted his and touched it against hers. “Here’s to us.”

She poured her glass out on the bar and looked at it flow along the wood. Then she picked up the olive and put it in her mouth. “There isn’t any us,” she said. “Not anymore.”

David took a handkerchief out of his pocket and wiped the bar and made another drink.

“It’s all shit,” Catherine said. David handed her the drink and she looked at it and then poured it on the bar. David mopped it up again and wrung out his handkerchief. Then he drank his own martini and made two more.

“This one you drink,” he said. “Just drink it.”

“Just drink,” she said. She lifted the glass and said, “Here’s to you and your god damned handkerchief.”

She drank the glass off and then held it, looking at it, and David was sure that she was going to throw it in his face. Then she put it down and picked the garlic olive out of it and ate it very carefully and handed David the pit.

“Semi-precious stone,” she said. “Put it in your pocket. I’ll have another one if you’ll make it.”

“But drink this one slowly.”

“Oh I’m quite all right now,” Catherine said. “You probably won’t notice the difference. I’m sure it happens to everybody.”

“Do you feel better?”

“Much better really. You just lose something and it’s gone that’s all. All we lose was all that we had. But we get some more. There’s no problem is there?”

“Are you hungry?”

“No. But I’m sure everything will be all right. You said it would didn’t you?”

“Of course it will.”

“I wish I could remember what it was we lost. But it doesn’t matter does it? You said it didn’t matter.”

“No.”

“Then let’s be cheerful. It’s just gone whatever it was.”

“It must have been something we forgot,” he said. “We’ll find it.”

“I did something I know. But it’s gone now.”

“That’s good.”

“It wasn’t anyone’s fault whatever it was.”

“Don’t talk about faults.”

“I know what it was now,” she smiled. “But I wasn’t unfaithful. Really David. How could I be? I couldn’t be. You know that. How could you say I was? Why did you say it?”

“You weren’t.”

“Of course I wasn’t. I wish you hadn’t said it though.”

“I didn’t say it, Devil.”

“Somebody did. But I wasn’t. I just did what I said I’d do. Where’s Marita?”

“She’s in her room I think.”

“I’m glad I’m all right again. Once you took it back I was all right. I wish it was you had done it so I could take it back about you. We’re us again aren’t we? I didn’t kill it.”

"No."

She smiled again. "That's good. I'll go and get her. Do you mind? She was worried about me. Before you came back."

"She was?"

"I talked a lot," Catherine said. "I always talk too much. She's awfully nice, David, if you knew her. She was very good to me."

"The hell with her."

"No. You took all that back. Remember? I don't want to have all that again. Do you? It's too confusing. Truly."

"All right bring her. She'll be glad to see you're feeling good again."

"I know she will and you must make her feel good too."

"Sure. Does she feel badly?"

"Only when I did. When I knew I was unfaithful. I never was before you know. You go and bring her, David. Then she won't feel bad. No don't bother, I'll go."

Catherine went out the door and David watched her go. Her movements were less mechanical and her voice was better. When she came back she was smiling and her voice was almost natural.

"She's coming in just a minute," she said. "She's lovely, David. I'm so glad you brought her."

The girl came in and David said, "We were waiting for you."

She looked at him and looked away. Then she looked back at him and held herself very straight and said, "I'm sorry to be late."

"You look very handsome," David said and it was quite true but she had the saddest eyes he had ever seen.

"Make her a drink please, David. I had two," Catherine said to the girl.

"I'm glad you feel better," the girl said.

"David made me feel good again," Catherine said. "I told him all about everything and how lovely it was and he understands perfectly. He really approves."

The girl looked at David and he saw the way her teeth bit her

upper lip and what she said to him with her eyes. “It was dull in town. I missed the swimming,” he said.

“You don’t know what you missed,” Catherine said. “You missed everything. It was what I wanted to do all my life and now I’ve done it and I loved it.”

The girl was looking down at her glass.

“The most wonderful thing is that I feel so grown up now. But it’s exhausting. Of course it’s what I wanted and now I’ve done it and I know I’m just an apprentice but I won’t always be.”

“Apprentice allowance claimed,” David said and took a chance then and said very cheerfully, “Don’t you ever talk on any other subjects? Perversion’s dull and old fashioned. I didn’t know people like us even kept up on it.”

“I suppose it’s only really interesting the first time one does it,” Catherine said.

“And then only to the person who does it and a bloody bore to everyone else,” David said. “Do you agree, Heiress?”

“Do you call her Heiress?” Catherine asked. “That’s a nice funny name.”

“I can’t very well call her Ma’am or Highness,” David said. “Do you agree, Heiress? About perversion?”

“I always thought it was overrated and silly,” she said. “It’s only something girls do because they have nothing better.”

“But one’s first time at anything is interesting,” Catherine said.

“Yes,” David said. “But would you want to always talk about your first ride at Steeplechase Park or how you, yourself, personally soloed alone all by yourself in a plane absolutely away from the earth and up in the sky?”

“I’m ashamed,” Catherine said. “Look at me and see if I’m not ashamed.”

David put his arm around her.

“Don’t be ashamed,” he said. “Just remember how you’d like to hear old Heiress here recall how she went up in that plane, just

herself and the plane, and there was nothing between her and the earth, imagine the Earth, with a big E, but just her *plane* and they might have been *killed* and smashed to horrible *bits* both of them and she lose her money and her health and her sanity and her life with a capital L and her loved ones or me or you or Jesus, all with capital letters, if she "crashed"—put the word *crashed* in quotes."

"Did you ever solo, Heiress?"

"No," the girl said. "I don't have to now. But I would like another drink. I love you, David."

"Kiss her again the way you did before," Catherine said.

"Sometime," David said. "I'm making drinks."

"I'm so glad we're all friends again and everything is fine," Catherine said. She was very animated now and her voice was natural and almost relaxed.

"I forgot about the surprise that Heiress bought this morning. I'll go and get it."

When Catherine was gone, the girl took David's hand and held it very tight and then kissed it. They sat and looked at each other. She touched his hand with her fingers almost absent-mindedly. She curled her fingers around his and then released them. "We don't need to talk," she said. "You don't want me to make a speech do you?"

"No. But we have to talk sometime."

"Would you like me to go away?"

"You'd be smarter to go away."

"Would you kiss me so I know that it is all right if I stay?" Catherine had come in now with the young waiter who carried a large tin of caviar in a bowl of ice on a tray with a plate of toast. "That was a wonderful kiss," she said. "Everyone saw it so there's no longer any fear of scandal or anything," Catherine said. "They're cutting up some egg whites and some onion."

It was very large firm gray caviar and Catherine dipped it onto the pieces of thin toast.

“Heiress bought you a case of Böllinger Brut 1915 and there is some iced. Don’t you think we should drink a bottle with this?”

“Sure,” said David. “Let’s have it all through the meal.”

“Isn’t it lucky Heiress and I are rich so you’ll never have anything to worry about? We’ll take good care of him won’t we Heiress?”

“We must try very hard,” the girl said. “I’m trying to study his needs. This was all we could find for today.”

Chapter Fourteen

He had slept about two hours when the daylight woke him and he looked at Catherine sleeping easily and looking happy in her sleep. He left her looking beautiful and young and unspoiled and then went into the bathroom and showered and put on a pair of shorts and walked barefoot through the garden to the room where he worked. The sky was washed clean after the wind and it was the fresh early morning of a new day toward the end of summer.

He started in again on the new and difficult story and worked attacking each thing that for years he had put off facing. He worked until nearly eleven o'clock and when he had finished for the day he shut up the room and went out and found the two girls playing chess at a table in the garden. They both looked fresh and young and as attractive as the wind-washed morning sky.

"She's beating me again," Catherine said. "How are you, David?"

The girl smiled at him very shyly.

They are the two loveliest girls I've ever seen, David thought. Now what will this day bring. "How are you two?" he said.

"We're very well," the girl said. "Did you have good luck?"

"It's all uphill but it's going well," he said.

"You haven't had any breakfast."

"It's too late for breakfast," David said.

"Nonsense," Catherine said. "You're wife of the day, Heiress. Make him eat breakfast."

"Wouldn't you like coffee and some fruit, David?" the girl asked. "You ought to eat something."

"I'll have some black coffee," David said.

“I’ll bring you something,” the girl said and went off into the hotel.

David sat by Catherine at the table and she put the chessmen and the board on a chair. She mussed his hair and said, “Have you forgotten you have a silver head like mine?”

“Yes,” he said.

“It’s going to be lighter and lighter and I’ll be fairer and fairer and darker in the body too.”

“That will be wonderful.”

“Yes and I’m all over everything.”

The pretty dark girl was bringing a tray with a small bowl rounded with caviar, a half lemon, a spoon and two pieces of toast and the young waiter had a bucket with a bottle of the Böllinger and a tray with three glasses.

“This will be good for David,” the girl said. “Then we can go swimming before lunch.”

After the swimming and lying in the sun on the beach and a big long lunch with more of the Böllinger, Catherine said, “I’m really tired and sleepy.”

“You swam a long way,” David said. “We’ll make a siesta.”

“I want to really sleep,” Catherine said.

“Do you feel well, Catherine?” the girl asked.

“Yes. Just deadly sleepy.”

“We’ll put you to bed,” David said. “Do you have a thermometer?” he asked the girl.

“I’m sure I haven’t any fever,” Catherine said. “I just want to sleep for a long time.”

When she was in bed the girl brought in the thermometer and David took Catherine’s temperature and her pulse. The temperature was normal and the pulse was one hundred and five.

“The pulse is a little high,” he said. “But I don’t know your normal pulse.”

“I don’t either but it’s probably too fast.”

“I don’t think the pulse means much with the temperature normal,” David said. “But if you have a fever I’ll bring a doctor up from Cannes.”

“I don’t want a doctor,” Catherine said. “I just want to sleep. Can I sleep now?”

“Yes, my beauty. You call if you want me.”

They stood and watched her go to sleep and then went out very quietly and David walked along the stones and looked through the window. Catherine was sleeping quietly and her breathing was regular. He brought two chairs up and a table and they sat in the shade near Catherine’s window and looked out through the pines to the blue sea. “What do you think?” David asked.

“I don’t know. She was happy this morning. Just as you saw her when you finished writing.”

“What about now?”

“Maybe just a reaction from yesterday. She’s a very natural girl, David, and this is natural.”

“Yesterday was like loving someone when someone’s died,” he said. “It wasn’t right.” He stood up and walked to the window and looked in. Catherine was sleeping in the same position and breathing lightly. “She’s sleeping well,” he told the girl. “Wouldn’t you like to take a nap?”

“I think so.”

“I’m going down to my room where I work,” he said. “There’s a door to yours that bolts on each side.” He walked down along the stones and unlocked the door of his room and then unbolted the door between the two rooms. He stood and waited and then heard the bolt turn on the other side of the door and then the door opened. They sat side by side on the bed and he put his arm around her. “Kiss me,” David said.

“I love to kiss you,” she said. “I love it so very much. But I can’t do the other.”

“No?”

"No, I can't."

Then she said, "Isn't there anything I can do for you now? I'm so ashamed about the other but you know how it could make trouble."

"Just lie here by me."

"I'd love that."

"Do what you like."

"I will," she said. "You too please. Do what we can."

Catherine slept all through the afternoon and early evening. David and the girl were sitting at the bar having a drink together and the girl said, "They never did bring the mirror."

"Did you ask old man Aurol about it?"

"Yes. He was pleased."

"I'd better pay him corkage on that Böllinger or something."

"I gave him four bottles and two very good bottles of *fine.* He's taken care of. It was Madame I was afraid of about trouble."

"You were absolutely right."

"I don't want to make trouble, David."

"No," he said. "I don't think you do."

The young waiter had come in with more ice and David made two martinis and gave her one. The waiter put in the garlic olives and then went back to the kitchen.

"I'll go and see how Catherine is," the girl said. "Things will turn out or they won't."

She was gone for about ten minutes and he felt of the girl's drink and decided to drink it before it got warm. He took it in his hand and raised it to his lips and he found as it touched his lips that it gave him pleasure because it was hers. It was clear and undeniable. That's all you need, he thought. That's all you need to make things really perfect. Be in love with both of them. What's happened to you since last May? What are you anymore anyway? But he touched the glass to his lips again and there was the same reaction as before. All right, he said, remember to do the work. The work is what you have left. You better fork up with the work.

The girl carne back and when he saw her come in, her face happy, he knew how he felt about her.

"She's getting dressed," the girl said. "She feels fine. Isn't it wonderful?"

"Yes," he said, loving Catherine too as always.

"What happened to my drink?"

"I drank it," he said. "Because it was yours."

"Truly, David?" She blushed and was happy.

"That's as well as I can put it," he said. "Here's a new one."

She tasted it and passed her lips very lightly over the rim and then passed it to him and he did the same and took a long sip. "You're beautiful," he said. "And I love you."

Chapter Fifteen

He heard the Bugatti start and the noise came as a surprise and an intrusion because there was no motor noise in the country where he was living. He was completely detached from everything except the story he was writing and he was living in it as he built it. The difficult parts he had dreaded he now faced one after another and as he did the people, the country, the days and the nights, and the weather were all there as he wrote. He went on working and he felt as tired as if he had spent the night crossing the broken volcanic desert and the sun had caught him and the others with the dry gray lakes still ahead. He could feel the weight of the heavy double-barreled rifle carried over his shoulder, his hand on the muzzle, and he tasted the pebble in his mouth. Across the shimmer of the dry lakes he could see the distant blue of the escarpment. Ahead of him there was no one, and behind was the long line of porters who knew that they had reached this point three hours too late.

It was not him, of course, who had stood there that morning; nor had he even worn the patched corduroy jacket faded almost white now, the armpits rotted through by sweat, that he took off then and handed to his Kamba servant and brother who shared with him the guilt and knowledge of the delay, watching him smell the sour, vinegary smell and shake his head in disgust and then grin as he swung the jacket over his black shoulder holding it by the sleeves as they started off across the dry-baked gray, the gun muzzles in their right hands, the barrels balanced on their shoulders, the heavy stocks pointing back toward the line of porters.

It was not him, but as he wrote it was and when someone read

it, finally, it would be whoever read it and what they found when they should reach the escarpment, if they reached it, and he would make them reach its base by noon of that day; then whoever read it would find what there was there and have it always.

All your father found he found for you too, he thought, the good, the wonderful, the bad, the very bad, the really very bad, the truly bad and then the much worse. It was a shame a man with such a talent for disaster and for delight should have gone the way he went, he thought. It always made him happy to remember his father and he knew his father would have liked this story.

It was nearly noon when he came out of the room and walked barefoot on the stones of the patio to the entrance of the hotel. In the big room workmen were putting up a mirror on the wall behind the bar. Monsieur Aurol and the young waiter were with them and he spoke to them and went out in the kitchen where he found Madame.

"Have you any beer, Madame?" he asked her.

"Mais certainement, Monsieur Bourne," she said and brought a cold bottle from the ice chest.

"I'll drink it from the bottle," he said.

"As Monsieur wishes," she said. "The ladies drove to Nice I believe. Monsieur worked well?"

"Very well."

"Monsieur works too hard. It's not good not to take breakfast."

"Is there any of that caviar left in the tin?"

"I'm sure there is."

"I'll take a couple of spoonsful."

"Monsieur is odd," Madame said. "Yesterday you ate it with champagne. Today with beer."

"I'm alone today," David said. "Do you know if my bicyclette is still in the *remise?"*

"It should be," Madame said.

David took a spoonful of the caviar and offered the tin to

Madame. “Have some, Madame. It’s very good.”

“I shouldn’t,” she said.

“Don’t be silly,” he told her. “Take some. There’s some toast. Take a glass of champagne. There’s some in the ice box.”

Madame took a spoonful of caviar and put it on a piece of toast left from breakfast and poured herself a glass of rose.

“It is excellent,” she said. “Now we must put it away.”

“Do you feel any good effect?” David asked. “I’m going to have one more spoon.”

“Ah, Monsieur. You mustn’t joke like that.”

“Why not?” David said. “My joking partners are away. If those two beautiful women come back tell them I went for a swim will you?”

“Certainly. The little one is a beauty. Not as beautiful as Madame of course.”

“I find her not too ugly,” David said.

“She’s a beauty, Monsieur, and very charming.”

“She’ll do until something else comes along,” David said. “If you think she’s pretty.”

“Monsieur,” she said in deepest reproof.

“What are all the architectural reforms?” David asked.

“The new *miroir* for the bar? It’s such a charming gift to the maison.”

“Everyone’s full of charm,” David said. “Charm and sturgeon eggs. Ask the boy to look at my tires while I put something on my feet and find a cap, will you please?”

“Monsieur likes to go barefoot. Me too in summer.”

“We’ll go barefoot together sometime.”

“Monsieur,” she said giving it everything.

“Is Aurol jealous?”

“Sans blague,” she said. “I’ll tell the two beautiful ladies you’ve gone swimming.”

“Keep the caviar away from Aurol,” David said. *“À bientôt, chère*

Madame."

"À tout à l'heure, Monsieur."

On the shiny black road that mounted through the pines as he left the hotel he felt the pull in his arms and his shoulders and the rounding thrust of his feet against the pedals as he climbed in the hot sun with the smell of the pines and the light breeze that came from the sea. He bent his back forward and pulled lightly against his hands and felt the cadence that had been ragged as he first mounted begin to smooth out as he passed the hundred-meter stones and then the first red-topped kilometer marker and then the second. At the headland the road dipped to border the sea and he braked and dismounted and put the bicycle over his shoulder and walked down with it along the trail to the beach. He propped it against a pine tree that gave off the resin smell of the hot day and he dropped down to the rocks, stripped and put his espadrilles on his shorts, shirt and cap and he dove from the rocks into the deep clear cold sea. He came up through the varying light and when his head came out he shook it to clear his ears and then swam out to sea. He lay on his back and Boated and watched the sky and the first white clouds that were coming with the breeze.

He swam back in to the cove finally and climbed up on the dark red rocks and sat there in the sun looking down into the sea. He was happy to be alone and to have finished his work for the day. Then the loneliness he always had after work started and he began to think about the girls and to miss them; not to miss the one nor the other at first, but to miss them both. Then he thought of them, not critically, not as any problem of love or fondness, nor of obligation nor of what had happened or would happen, nor of any problem of conduct now or to come, but simply of how he missed them. He was lonely for them both, alone and together, and he wanted them both.

Sitting in the sun on the rock looking down into the sea, he knew it was wrong to want them both but he did. Nothing with

either of those two can end well and neither can you now, he told himself. But do not start blaming who you love nor apportioning blame. It will all be apportioned in due time and not by you.

He looked down into the sea and tried to think clearly what the situation was and it did not work out. The worst was what had happened to Catherine. The next worse was that he had begun to care for the other girl. He did not have to examine his conscience to know that he loved Catherine nor that it was wrong to love two women and that no good could ever come of it. He did not yet know how terrible it could be. He only knew that it had started. The three of you are already enmeshed like three gears that turn a wheel, he told himself and also told himself one gear had been stripped or, at least, badly damaged. He dove deep down into the clear cold water where he missed no one and then came up and shook his head and swam out further and then turned to swim back to the beach.

He dressed, still wet from the sea and put his cap in his pocket, then climbed up to the road with his bicycle and mounted, driving the machine up the short hill feeling the lack of training in his thighs as he pressed the balls of his feet on the pedals with the steady climbing thrust that carried him up the black road as though he and the racing bike were some wheeled animal. Then he coasted down, his hands fingering the brakes, taking the curves fast, dropping down the shiny dark road through the pines, to the turnoff at the back court of the hotel where the sea shone summer blue beyond the trees.

The girls were not back yet and he went into the room and took a shower, changed to a fresh shirt and shorts and came out ‘to the bar with its new and handsome mirror. He called the boy and asked him to bring a lemon, a knife and some ice and showed him how to make a Tom Collins. Then he sat on the bar stool and looked into the mirror as he lifted the tall drink. I do not know if I’d have a drink with you or not if I’d met you four months ago, he thought.

The boy brought him the *Éclaireur de Nice* and he read it while he waited. He had been disappointed not to find the girls returned and he missed them and began to worry.

When they came in, finally, Catherine was very gay and excited and the girl was contrite and very quiet.

"Hello darling," Catherine said to David. "Oh look at the mirror. They did get it up. It's a very good one too. It's awfully critical though. I'll go in and clean up for lunch. I'm sorry we're late."

"We stopped in town and had a drink," the girl said to David. "I'm sorry to have kept you waiting."

"A drink?" David said.

The girl held up two fingers. She put her face up and kissed him and was gone. David went back to reading the paper.

When Catherine came out she was wearing the dark blue linen shirt that David liked and slacks and she said, "Darling I hope you're not cross. It wasn't really our fault. I saw Jean and I asked him to have a drink with us and he did and was so nice."

"The coiffeur?"

"Jean. Of course. What other Jean would I know in Cannes? He was so nice and he asked about you. Can I have a martini, darling? I've only had one."

"Lunch must be ready by now."

"Just one, darling. They only have us for lunch."

David made two martinis taking his time and the girl came in. She was wearing a white sharkskin dress and she looked fresh and cool. "May I have one too, David? It was a very hot day. How was it here?"

"You should have stayed home and looked after him," Catherine said.

"I got along all right," David said. "The sea was very good."

"You use such interesting adjectives," Catherine said. "They make everything so vivid."

"Sorry," David said.

“That’s another dandy word,” Catherine said. “Explain what dandy means to your new girl. It’s an Americanism.”

“I think I know it,” the girl said. “It’s the third word in ‘Yankee Doodle Dandy.’ Don’t please be cross Catherine.”

“I’m not cross,” Catherine said. “But two days ago when you made passes at me it was simply dandy but today if I felt that way the slightest bit you had to act as though I was an I don’t know what.”

“I’m sorry, Catherine,” the girl said.

“Another sorry sorry,” Catherine said. “As though you hadn’t taught me what little I know.”

“Should we have lunch?” David said. “It’s been a hot day Devil, and you’re tired.”

“I’m tired of everybody,” Catherine said. “Please forgive me.”

“There’s nothing to forgive,” the girl said. “I’m sorry I was stuffy. I didn’t come here to be that way.” She walked over to Catherine and kissed her very gently and lightly. “Now be a good girl,” she said. “Should we go to the table?”

“Didn’t we have lunch?” Catherine asked.

“No, Devil,” David said. “We’re going to have lunch now.”

At the end of lunch Catherine who had made sense through nearly all of it except for some absentmindedness said, “Please excuse me but I think I ought to sleep.”

“Let me come with you and see you get to sleep,” the girl said.

“Actually I think I drank too much,” Catherine said.

“I’ll come in and take a nap too,” David said.

“No please David. Come in when I’m asleep if you want,” Catherine said.

In about half an hour the girl came out of the room “She’s all right,” she said. “But we must be careful and good with her and only think about her.”

In the room Catherine was awake when David came in and he went over and sat on the bed.

“I’m not a damned invalid,” she said. “I just drank too much. I know. I’m sorry I lied to you about it. How could I do that, David?”

“You didn’t remember.”

“No. I did it on purpose. Will you take me back? I’m over all the bitchiness.”

“You never were away.”

“If you take me back is all I want. I’ll be your really true girl and really truly be. Would you like that?”

He kissed her.

“Really kiss me.”

“Oh,” she said. “Please be slow.”

They swam at the cove where they had gone the first day. David had planned to send the two girls to swim and then to take the old Isotta down to Cannes to have the brakes fixed and the ignition overhauled. But Catherine had asked him to please swim with them and to do the car the next day and she seemed so happy and sound and cheerful again after her nap and Marita had said very seriously, “Will you please come?” So he had driven them to the turnout for the cove and shown them both on the way how dangerously the brakes were working.

“You’d kill yourself with this car,” he told Marita. “It’s a crime to drive it the way it is.”

“Had I ought to get a new one?” she asked.

“Christ no. Just let me fix the brakes to start with.”

“We need a larger car with room for all of us,” Catherine said.

“This is a fine car,” David said. “It just needs a hell of a lot of work done on it. But it’s too much car for you.”

“You see if they can fix it properly,” the girl said. “If they can’t we’ll get the type of car you want.”

Then they were tanning on the beach and David said lazily, “Come in and swim.”

“Pour some water on my head,” Catherine said. “I brought a sand bucket in the rucksack.”

“Oh that feels wonderful,” she said. “Could I have one more? Pour it on my face too.”

She lay on the hard beach on her white robe in the sun and David and the girl swam out to sea and around the rocks at the mouth of the cove. The girl was swimming ahead and David overhauled her. He reached out and grabbed a foot and then held her close in his arms and kissed her as they treaded water. She felt slippery and strange in the water and they seemed the same height as they treaded water with their bodies close together and kissed. Then her head went under and he leaned back and she came up laughing and shaking her head that was sleek as a seal, and she brought her lips against his again and they kissed until they both went under. They lay side by side and floated and touched and then kissed hard and happily and went under again.

“I don’t worry about anything now,” she said, when they came up again. “You mustn’t either.”

“I won’t,” he said and they swam in.

“You better go in, Devil,” he said to Catherine. “Your head will get too hot.”

“All right. Let’s go in,” she said. “Let Heiress darken now. Let me put some oil on her.”

“Not too much,” the girl said. “May I have a pail of water on my head too?”

“Your head’s as wet as it can get,” Catherine said.

“I just wanted to feel it,” the girl said.

“Wade out, David, and get a good cold one,” Catherine said.

And after he had poured the clear cool sea water on Marita’s head they left her lying with her face on her arms and swam out to sea. They floated easily like sea animals and Catherine said, “Wouldn’t it be wonderful if I wasn’t crazy?”

“You’re not crazy.”

“Not this afternoon,” she said. “Anyway not so far. Can we swim further?”

“We’re pretty well out, Devil.”

“All right. Let’s swim back in. But the deep water’s beautiful out here.”

“Do you want to swim down once before we go in?”

“Just once,” she said. “In this very deep part.”

“We’ll swim down until we just can make it up.”

Chapter Sixteen

He woke when it was barely just light enough to see the pine trunks and he left the bed, careful not to wake Catherine, found his shorts and went, the soles of his feet wet from the dew on the stones, along the length of the hotel to the door of his work room. As he opened the door he felt, again, the touch of the air from the sea that promised how the day would be.

When he sat down the sun was not yet up and he felt that he had made up some of the time that was lost in the story. But as he reread his careful legible hand and the words took him away and into the other country, he lost that advantage and was faced with the same problem and when the sun rose out of the sea it had, for him, risen long before and he was well into the crossing of the gray, dried, bitter lakes his boots now white with crusted alkalis. He felt the weight of the sun on his head and his neck and his back. His shirt was wet and he felt the sweat go down his back and between his thighs. When he stood straight up and rested, breathing slowly, and his shirt hung away from his shoulders, he could feel it dry in the sun and see the white patches that the salts of his body made in the drying. He could feel and see himself standing there and knew there was nothing to do except go on.

At half past ten he had crossed the lakes and was well beyond them. By then he had reached the river and the great grove of fig trees where they would make their camp. The bark of the trunks was green and yellow and the branches were heavy. Baboons had been eating the wild figs and there were baboon droppings and broken figs on the ground. The smell was foul.

But the half past ten was on the watch on his wrist as he looked at it in the room where he sat at a table feeling the breeze from the sea now and the real time was evening and he was sitting against the yellow gray base of a tree with a glass of whiskey and water in his hand and the rolled figs swept away watching the porters butchering out the Kongoni he had shot in the first grassy swale they passed before they came to the river.

I'll leave them with meat, he thought and so it is a happy camp tonight no matter what comes after. So he put his pencils and the notebooks away and locked the suitcase and went out the door and walked on the stones, dry and warm now, to the hotel patio.

The girl was sitting at one of the tables reading a book. She wore a striped fisherman's shirt and tennis skirt and espadrilles and when she saw him she looked up and David thought she was going to blush but she seemed to check it and said, "Good morning, David. Did you work well?"

"Yes, beauty," he said.

She stood up then and kissed him good morning and said, "I'm very happy then. Catherine went in to Cannes. She said to tell you I was to take you swimming."

"Didn't she want you to go in town with her?"

"No. She wanted me to stay. She said you got up terribly early to work and maybe you'd be lonely when you finished. Can I order some breakfast? You shouldn't always not eat breakfast."

The girl went into the kitchen and she came out with *oeufs au plat avec jambon* and English mustard and Sovora.

"Was it difficult today?" she asked him.

"No," he said. "It's always difficult but it's easy too. It went very well."

"I wish I could help."

"Nobody can help," he said.

"But I can help in other things can't I?"

He started to say there are no other things but he did not say it

and instead he said, “You have and you do.”

He wiped the last of the egg and mustard up from the shallow dish with a small piece of bread and then drank some tea. “How did you sleep?” he asked.

“Very well,” the girl said. “I hope that’s not disloyal.”

“No. That’s intelligent.”

“Can we stop being so polite?” the girl asked. “Everything was so simple and fine until now.”

“Yes, let’s stop. Let’s stop even the ‘I can’t David’ nonsense,” he said.

“All right,” she said and stood up. “If you want to go swimming I’ll be in my room.”

He stood up. “Please don’t go,” he said. “I’ve stopped being a shit.”

“Don’t stop for me,” she said. “Oh David how could we ever get in a thing like this? Poor David. What women do to you.” She was stroking his head and smiling at him. “I’ll get the swimming things if you want to swim.”

“Good,” he said. “I’ll go get my espadrilles.”

They lay on the sand where David had spread the beach robes and the towels in the shade of a red rock and the girl said, “You go in and swim and then I will.”

He lifted very slowly and gently up out and away from her and then waded out from the beach and dove under where the water was cold and swam deep. When he came up he swam out against the chop of the breeze and then swam in to where the girl was waiting for him standing up to her waist in the water her black head sleek and wet, her light brown body dripping. He held her tight and the waves washed against them.

They kissed and she said, “Everything of ours washed into the ocean.”

“We have to get back.”

“Let’s go under once together holding tight.”

Back at the hotel Catherine had not arrived and after they had

taken showers and changed David and Marita sat at the bar with two martinis. They looked at each other in the mirror. They watched each other very carefully and then David passed his finger under his nose while he looked at her and she blushed.

"I want to have more things like that," she said. "Things that only we have so I won't be jealous."

"I wouldn't put out too many anchors," he said. "You might foul the cables."

"No. I'll find things to do that will hold you."

"That's a good practical Heiress," he said.

"I wish I could change that name. Don't you?"

"Names go to the bone," he said.

"Then let's really change mine," she said. "Would you mind terribly?"

"No. . . . *Haya*."

"Say it again please."

"Haya."

"Is it good?"

"Very good. It's a small name between us. For nobody else ever."

"What does Haya mean?"

"The one who blushes. The modest one."

He held her close and tight and she settled against him and her head was on his shoulder.

"Kiss me just once," she said.

Catherine came into the big room dishevelled, excited and full of accomplishment and gaiety.

"You *did* take him swimming," she said. "You both do look handsome enough, though still wet from the shower. Let me look at you."

"Let me look at *you,"* the girl said. "What did you do to your hair?"

"It's *cendre,"* Catherine said. "Do you like it? It's a rinse that Jean's experimenting with."

"It's beautiful," the girl said.

Catherine's hair was strange and exalting against her dark face. She picked up Marita's drink and sipping it watched herself in the mirror and said, "Did you have fun swimming?"

"We both had a good swim," the girl said. "But not as long as yesterday."

"This is such a good drink, David," Catherine said. "What makes your martinis better than anyone else's?"

"Gin," David said.

"Will you make me one please?"

"You don't want one now, Devil. We're going to have lunch."

"Yes I do," she said. "I'm going to sleep after lunch. You didn't have to go through all the bleaching and re-bleaching and all of it. It's exhausting."

"What color is your hair really now?" David asked.

"It's almost like white," she said. "You'd like it. But I want to keep this so we see how it lasts."

"How white is it?" David asked.

"About like the soap suds," she said. "Do you remember?"

That evening Catherine was completely different from the way she had been at mid-day. She was sitting at the bar when they drove up from swimming. The girl had stopped off at her room and when David came into the big main room he said, "What have you done to yourself now, Devil?"

"I shampooed all that nonsense out," she said. "It made gray stains on the pillow."

She looked very striking, her hair a very light almost toneless silver that made her face darker than it had ever looked.

"You're too damned beautiful," he said. "But I wish they'd never touched your hair."

"It's too late for that now. Can I tell you something else?"

"Sure."

"Tomorrow I'm not going to have drinks and I'm going to study Spanish and read again and stop thinking only about myself."

"My God," David said. "You had a big day. Here, let me get a

drink and go in and change."

"I'll be here," Catherine said. "Put on your dark blue shirt will you? The one I got you like the one of mine?"

David took his time in the shower and changing and when he came back the two girls were together at the bar and he wished he could have a painting of them.

"I told Heiress everything about my new leaf," Catherine said.

"The one I just turned over and how I want you to love her too and you can marry her too if she'll have you."

"We could in Africa if I was registered Mohammedan. You're allowed three wives."

"I think it would be much nicer if we were all married," Catherine said. "Then no one could criticize us. Will you really marry him, Heiress?"

"Yes," the girl said.

"I'm so pleased," Catherine said. "Everything I worried about is so simple now."

"Would you really?" David asked the dark girl.

"Yes," she said. "Ask me."

David looked at her. She was very serious and excited. He thought of her face with her eyes closed against the sun and her black head against the whiteness of the towel robe on the yellow sand as it had been when they had made love at last. "I'll ask you," he said. "But not in any damned bar."

"This isn't any damned bar," Catherine said. "This is our own special bar and we bought the mirror. I wish we could marry you tonight."

"Don't talk balls," David said.

"I'm not," said Catherine. "I really mean it. Truly."

"Do you want a drink?" David asked.

"No," Catherine said. "I want to get it said right first. Look at me and see." The girl was looking down and David looked at Catherine. "I thought it all out this afternoon," she said. "I really did. Didn't I

tell you, Marita?"

"She did," the girl said.

David saw that she was serious about this and that they had reached some understanding that he did not know about.

"I'm still your wife," Catherine said. "We'll start with that. I want Marita to be your wife too to help me out and then she inherits from me."

"Why does she have to inherit?"

"People make their wills," she said. "And this is more important than a will."

"What about you?" David asked the girl.

"I want to do it if you want me to."

"Good," he said. "Do you mind if I have a drink?"

"You have one please," Catherine said. "You see I'm not going to have you ruined if I'm crazy and I won't be able to decide. I'm not going to be shut up either. I decided that too. She loves you and you love her a little. I can tell. You'd never find anybody else like her and I don't want you to go to some damn bitch or be lonely."

"Come on and cheer up," David said. "You're healthy as a goat."

"Well, we're going to do it," Catherine said. "We'll work out everything."

Chapter Seventeen

The sun was bright now in the room and it was a new day. You better get to work, he told himself. You can't change any of it back. Only one person can change it back and she can't know how she will wake nor if she'll be there when she wakes. It doesn't matter how you feel. You better get to work. You have to make sense there. You don't make any in this other. Nothing will help you. Nor would have ever since it started.

When he finally got back into the story the sun was well up and he had forgotten the two girls. It had been necessary to think what his father would have thought sitting that evening with his back against the green-yellow trunk of the fig tree with the enameled cup of whiskey and water in his hand. His father had dealt so lightly with evil, giving it no chance ever and denying its importance so that it had no status and no shape nor dignity. He treated evil like an old entrusted friend, David thought, and evil, when she poxed him, never knew she'd scored. His father was not vulnerable he knew and, unlike most people he had known, only death could kill him. Finally, he knew what his father had thought and knowing it, he did not put it in the story. He only wrote what his father did and how he felt and in all this he became his father and what his father said to Molo was what he said. He slept well on the ground under the tree and he waked and heard the leopard cough. Later he did not hear the leopard in the camp but he knew he was there and he went back to sleep. The leopard was after meat and there was plenty of meat so there was no problem. In the morning before daylight sitting by the ashes of the fire with his tea in the chipped

enameled cup he asked Molo if the leopard had taken meat and Molo said, “Ndiyo” and he said, “There’s plenty where we’re going. Get them moving so we can start the climb.”

They were moving for the second day through the high wooded and park-like country above the escarpment when he stopped finally and he was happy with the country and the day and the distance they had made. He had his father’s ability to forget now and not dread anything that was coming. There was another day and another night ahead in that new high country when he stopped and he had lived two days and a night today.

Now that he left that country his father was with him still as he locked the door and walked back to the big room and the bar.

He told the boy he did not want breakfast and to bring him a whiskey and Perrier and the morning paper. It was past noon and he had intended to drive the old Isotta into Cannes and see that the repairs were made but he knew the garages were closed now and it was too late. Instead he stood at the bar because that’s where he would have found his father at that hour and, having just come down from the high country, he missed him. The sky outside was very much the sky that he had left. It was high blue and the clouds white cumulus and he welcomed his father’s presence at the bar until he glanced in the mirror and saw he was alone. He had intended to ask his father about two things. His father, who ran his life more disastrously than any man that he had ever known, gave marvelous advice. He distilled it out of the bitter mash of all his previous mistakes with the freshening addition of the new mistakes he was about to make and he gave it with an accuracy and precision that carried the authority of a man who had heard all the more grisly provisions of his sentence and gave it no more importance than he had given to the fine print on a transatlantic steamship ticket.

He was sorry that his father had not stayed but he could hear the advice clearly enough and he smiled. His father would have

given it more exactly but he, David, had stopped writing because he was tired and, tired, he could not do justice to his father's style. No one could, really, and sometimes his father could not either. He knew now, more than ever, why he had always put off writing this story and he knew he must not think about it now that he had left it or he would damage his ability to write it.

You must not worry about it before you start nor when you stop he told himself. You're lucky to have it and don't start fumbling with it now. If you cannot respect the way you handle your life then certainly respect your trade. You know about your trade at least. But it was a rather awful story really. By God it was.

He sipped the whiskey and Perrier again and looked out the door at the late summer day. He was cooling out as he always did and the giant killer made things better. He wondered where the girls were. They were late again and he hoped that this time it would be nothing bad. He was not a tragic character, having his father and being a writer barred him from that, and as he finished the whiskey and Perrier he felt even less of one. He had never known a morning when he had not waked happily until the enormity of the day had touched him and he had accepted this day now as he had accepted all the others for himself. He had lost the capacity of personal suffering, or he thought he had, and only could be hurt truly by what happened to others. He believed this, wrongly of course since he did not know then how one's capacities can change, nor how the other could change, and it was a comfortable belief. He thought of the two girls and wished that they would turn up. It was getting too late to swim before lunch but he wanted to see them. He thought about them both. Then he went into his and Catherine's room and took a shower and shaved. He was shaving when he heard the car come up and he felt the sudden empty feeling in his gut. Then he heard their voices and heard them laughing and he found a fresh pair of shorts and a shirt and pulled them on and went out to see how things would be.

The three of them had quiet drinks and then a lunch that was good but light and they drank Tavel and when they were eating cheese and fruit Catherine said, “Should I tell him?”

“If you want,” the girl said. She picked up her wine and drank part of it down.

“I forgot how to say it,” Catherine said. “We waited too long.”

“Can’t you remember it?” the girl said.

“No, I’ve forgotten it and it was wonderful. We had it all worked out and it was really wonderful.”

David poured himself another glass of Tavel.

“Do you want to try for just the factual content?” he asked.

“I know the factual content,” Catherine said. “It’s that yesterday you made siesta with me and then you went to Marita’s room but today you can just go there. But I’ve spoiled it now and what I wish is we could all just make siesta together.”

“Not siesta,” David heard himself say.

“I suppose not,” Catherine said. “Well I’m sorry I said it all wrong and I couldn’t help saying what I wished.”

In the room he said to Catherine, “To hell with her.”

“No, David. She wanted to do what I asked her. Maybe she can tell you.”

“Fuck her.”

“Well you have,” she said. “That’s not the point. Go and talk with her David. And if you want to fuck her then fuck her good for me.”

“Don’t talk rough.”

“You used it. I just knocked it back. Like tennis.”

“All right,” David said. “What’s she supposed to say to me?”

“My speech,” Catherine said. “The one I forgot. Don’t look so serious or I won’t let you go. You’re awfully appealing when you’re serious. You’d better go before she forgets the speech.”

“The hell with you too.”

“That’s good. Now you’re reacting better. I like you when you

are more careless. Kiss me goodbye. I mean good afternoon. You really better go or she really will forget the speech. Don't you see how reasonable and good I am?"

"You're not reasonable and good."

"You like me though."

"Sure."

"Do you want me to tell you a secret?"

"A new one?"

"An old one."

"All right."

"You aren't very hard to corrupt and you're an awful lot of fun to corrupt."

"You ought to know."

"It was just a joke secret. There isn't any corruption. We just have fun. Go on in and have her make my speech before she forgets it too. Go on and be a good boy David."

In the room at the far end of the hotel David lay on the bed and said, "What's it all about really?"

"It's just what she said last night," the girl said. "She really means it. You don't know how much she means it."

"Did you tell her we'd made love?"

"No."

"She knew it."

"Does it matter?"

"It didn't seem to."

"Take a glass of wine, David, and be comfortable. I'm not indifferent," she said. "I hope you know that."

"I'm not either," he said.

Then their lips were together and he felt her body against his and her breasts against his chest and her lips tight against his and then open, her head moving from side to side and her breathing and the feel of his belt buckle against his belly and in his hands.

They lay on the beach and David watched the sky and the movement of the clouds and did not think at all. Thinking did no

good and when he lay down he had thought that if he did not think then everything that was wrong might go away. The girls were talking but he did not listen to them. He lay and watched the September sky and when the girls had fallen silent he started to think and without looking at the girl he asked, “What are you thinking?”

“Nothing,” she said.

“Ask me,” Catherine said.

“I can guess what you’re thinking.”

“No you can’t. I was thinking about the Prado.”

“Have you been there?” David asked the girl.

“Not yet,” she said.

“We’ll go,” Catherine said. “When can we go, David?”

“Anytime,” David said. “I want to finish this story first.”

“Will you work hard on the story?”

“That’s what I’m doing. I can’t work any harder.”

“I didn’t mean to hurry it.”

“I won’t,” he said. “If you’re getting bored here you two go on ahead and I’ll find you there.”

“I don’t want to do that,” Marita said.

“Don’t be silly,” Catherine said. “He’s just being noble.”

“No. You can go.”

“It wouldn’t be any fun without you,” Catherine said. “You know that. We two in Spain wouldn’t be fun.”

“He’s working, Catherine,” Marita said.

“He could work in Spain,” Catherine said. “Plenty of Spanish writers must have worked in Spain. I’ll bet I could write well in Spain if I was a writer.”

“I can write in Spain,” David said. “When do you want to go?”

“Damn you, Catherine,” Marita said. “He’s in the middle of a story.”

“He’s been writing for over six weeks,” Catherine said. “Why can’t we go to Madrid?”

“I said we could,” David said.

“Don’t you dare do that,” the girl said to Catherine. “Don’t you dare to try to do that. Haven’t you any conscience at all?”

“You’re a fine one to talk about conscience,” Catherine said. “I have a conscience about some things.”

“That’s fine. I’m happy to know it. Now will you try to be polite and not interfere when someone is trying to work out what’s best for everyone?”

“I’m going to swim,” David said.

The girl got up and followed him and outside the cove while they treaded water she said, “She’s crazy.”

“So don’t blame her.”

“But what are you going to do?”

“Finish the story and start another.”

“So what do you and I do?”

“What we can.”

Chapter Eighteen

He finished the story in four days. He had in it all the pressure that had built while he was writing it and the modest part of him was afraid that it could not possibly be as good as he believed it to be. The cold, hard part knew it was better.

"How was it today?" the girl asked him.

"I finished."

"Can I read it?"

"If you want to."

"You wouldn't mind truly?"

"It's in those two cahiers in the top of the suitcase." He handed her the key and then sat at the bar and drank a whiskey and Perrier and read the morning paper. She came back and sat on a stool a little way down from him and read the story.

When she finished it she started to read it over again and he made himself a second whiskey and soda and watched her read. When she finished it the second time he said, "Do you like it?"

"It's not a thing you like or not like," she said. "It's your father isn't it?"

"Sure."

"Was this when you stopped loving him?"

"No. I always loved him. This was when I got to know him."

"It's a terrible story and it's wonderful."

"I'm glad you like it," he said.

"I'll put it back now," she said. "I like going in the room when the door is locked."

"We have that," David said.

When they came back from the beach they found Catherine in the garden.

"So you got back," she said.

"Yes," David said. "We had a good swim. I wish you'd been there."

"Well, I wasn't," she said. "If it's of any interest to you."

"Where did you go?" David asked.

"I was in Cannes on my own business," she said. "You're both late for lunch."

"I'm sorry," David said. "Do you want to have anything before lunch?"

"Please excuse me, Catherine," Marita said. "I'll be back in a moment."

"You're still drinking before lunch?" Catherine asked David.

"Yes," he said. "I don't think it matters if you're getting a lot of exercise."

"There was an empty whiskey glass on the bar when I came in."

"Yes," said David. "I had two whiskeys actually."

"Actually," she mimicked him. "You're very British today."

"Really?" he said. "I didn't feel very British. I felt sort of half-assed Tahitian."

"It's just your way of speaking that irritates me," she said. "Your choice of words."

"I see," he said. "Did you want a shot before they bring the chow?"

"You don't have to be a clown."

"The best clowns don't talk," he said.

"Nobody accused you of being the best of clowns," she said.

"Yes. I'd like a drink if it isn't too much work for you to make it."

He made three martinis, measuring them each out separately and pouring them into the pitcher where there was a big chunk of ice and then stirring.

“Who is the third drink for?”

“Marita.”

“Your paramour.”

“My what?”

“Your paramour.”

“You really said it,” David told her. “I’d never heard that word pronounced and I had absolutely no hope of ever hearing it in this life. You’re really wonderful.”

“It’s a perfectly common word.”

“It is at that,” David said. “But to have the sheer, naked courage to use it in conversation. Devil, be good now. Couldn’t you say ‘your dusky paramour’?”

Catherine looked away as she raised her glass.

“And I used to find this type of banter amusing,” she said.

“Do you want to try to be decent?” David asked. “Both of us decent?”

“No,” she said. “Here comes your whatever you call her looking sweet and innocent as ever. I must say I’m glad I had her before you did. *Dear* Marita—tell me, did David work before he started drinking today?”

“Did you David?” Marita asked.

“I finished a story,” David said.

“And I suppose Marita’s already read it?”

“Yes, I did.”

“You know, I’ve never read a story of David’s. I never interfere. I’ve only tried to make it economically possible for him to do the best work of which he is capable.”

David took a sip of his drink and looked at her. She was the same wonderful dark and beautiful girl as ever and the ivory white hair was like a scar across her forehead. Only her eyes had changed and her lips that were saying things they were incapable of saying.

“I thought it was a very good story,” Marita said. “It was strange and how do you say *pastorale.* Then it became terrible in a way I

could not explain. I thought it was *magnifique."*

"Well—," Catherine said. "We all speak French you know. You might have made the whole emotional outburst in French."

"I was deeply moved by the story," Marita said.

"Because David wrote it or because it really is first rate?"

"Both," the girl said.

"Well," Catherine said, "is there any reason then why I can't read this extraordinary story? I did put up the money for it."

"You did what?" David asked.

"Perhaps not exactly. You did have fifteen hundred dollars when you married me and that book about all the mad fliers has sold, hasn't it? You never tell me how much. But I did put up a substantial sum and you must admit you've lived more comfortably than you did before you married me."

The girl did not say anything and David watched the waiter setting the table on the terrace. He looked at his watch. It was about twenty minutes before the time they usually had lunch. "I'd like to go in and clean up if I may," he said.

"Don't be so bloody false polite," Catherine said. "Why can't I read the story?"

"It's just written in pencil. It hasn't even been copied. You wouldn't want to read it that way."

"Marita read it that way."

"Read it after lunch then."

"I want to read it now, David."

"I really wouldn't read it before lunch."

"Is it disgusting?"

"It's a story about Africa back before the 1914 War. In the time of the Maji-Maji War. The native rebellion of 1905 in Tanganyika."

"I didn't know you wrote historical novels."

"I wish you'd leave it alone," David said. "It's a story that happens in Africa when I was about eight years old."

"I want to read it."

David had gone to the far end of the bar and was shaking dice out of a leather cup. The girl sat on a stool next to Catherine. He watched her watching Catherine as she read.

"It starts very well," she said. "Though your handwriting is atrocious. The country is superb. The passage. What Marita miscalled the *pastorale* part."

She put down the first notebook and the girl picked it up and held it on her lap, her eyes still watching Catherine.

Catherine read on and said nothing now. She was halfway through the second part. Then she tore the cahier in two and threw it on the floor.

"It's horrible," she said. "It's bestial. So that was what your father was like."

"No," said David. "But that was one way he was. You didn't finish it."

"Nothing would make me finish it."

"I didn't want you to read it at all."

"No. You both conspired to make me read it."

"May I have the key, David, to lock it up?" the girl asked. She had retrieved the torn halves of the notebook from the floor. It was just ripped apart. It was not torn across. David gave her his key.

"It's even more horrible written in that child's notebook," Catherine said. "You're a monster."

"It was a very odd rebellion," David said.

"You're a very odd person to write about it," she said.

"I asked you not to read the story."

She was crying now. "I hate you," she said.
They were in their room in bed and it was late.

"She'll go away and you'll have me shut up or put away," Catherine said.

"No. That isn't true."

"But you suggested we go to Switzerland."

"If you were worried we could see a good doctor. The same way we'd go to the dentist."

“No. They’d shut me up. I know. Everything that’s innocent to us is crazy to them. I know about those places.”

“It’s an easy drive and beautiful. We’d go by Aix and St. Remy and up the Rhône from Lyon to Geneva. We’d see him and get some good advice and make a fun trip out of it.”

“I won’t go.”

“A very good intelligent doctor that—”

“I won’t go. Didn’t you hear me? I won’t go. I won’t go. Do you want me to scream?”

“All right. Don’t think about it now. Just try to sleep.”

“If I don’t have to go.”

“We don’t have to.”

“I’ll sleep then. Are you going to work in the morning?”

“Yes. I might as well.”

“You’ll work well,” she said. “I know you will. Good night David. You sleep well too.”

He did not sleep for a long time. When he did he had dreams of Africa. They were good dreams until the one that woke him. He got up then and went direct from that dream to work. He was well into the new story before the sun came up out of the sea and he did not look up from where he was to see how red the sun was. In the story he was waiting for the moon to rise and he felt his dog’s hair rise under his hand as he stroked him to be quiet and they both watched and listened as the moon came up and gave them shadows. His arm was around the dog’s neck now and he could feel him shivering. All of the night sounds had stopped. They did not hear the elephant and David did not see him until the dog turned his head and seemed to settle into David. Then the elephant’s shadow covered them and he moved past making no noise at all and they smelled him in the light wind that came down from the mountain. He smelled strong but old and sour and when he was past David saw that the left tusk was so long it seemed to reach the ground. They waited but no other elephants came by and then David and the dog

started off running in the moonlight. The dog kept close behind him and when David stopped the dog pressed his muzzle into the back of his knee. David had to see the bull again and they came up on him at the edge of the forest. He was travelling toward the mountain and slowly now moving into the steady night breeze. David came close enough to see him cut off the moon again and to smell the sour oldness but he could not see the right tusk. He was afraid to work closer with the dog and he took him back with the wind and pushed him down against the base of a tree and tried to make him understand. He thought the dog would stay and he did but when David moved up toward the bulk of the elephant again he felt the wet muzzle against the hollow of his knee.

The two of them followed the elephant until he came to an opening in the trees. He stood there moving his huge ears. His bulk was in the shadow but the moon would be on his head. David reached behind him and closed the dog's jaws gently with his hand and then moved softly and unbreathing to his right along the edge of the night breeze feeling it on his cheek, edging with it, never letting it get between him and the bulk until he could see the elephant's head and the great ears slowly moving. The right tusk was as thick as his own thigh and it curved down almost to the ground.

He and the dog moved back, the wind on his neck now, and they backtracked out of the forest and into the open park country. The dog was ahead of him now and he stopped where David had left the two hunting spears by the trail when they had followed the elephant. He swung them over his shoulder in their thong and leather cup harness and, with his best spear that he had kept with him all the time in his hand, they started on the trail for the shamba. The moon was high now and he wondered why there was no drumming from the shamba. Something was strange if his father was there and there was no drumming.

Chapter Nineteen

They were lying on the firm sand of the smallest of the three coves, the one they always went to when they were alone, and the girl said, “She won’t go to Switzerland.”

“She shouldn’t go to Madrid either. Spain is a bad place to crack up.”

“I feel as though we’d been married all our lives and never had anything but problems.” She pushed his hair back from his forehead and kissed him. “Do you want to swim now?”

“Yes. Let’s dive from the high rock. The really high one.”

“You do,” she said. “I’ll swim out and you dive over my head.”

“All right. But hold still when I dive.”

“See how close you can come.”

Looking up, she watched him poised on the high rock, arced brown against the blue sky. Then he came toward her and the water rose in a spout from a hole in the water behind her shoulder. He turned under water and came up in front of her and shook his head. “I cut it too fine,” he said.

They swam out to the point and back and then wiped each other dry and dressed on the beach.

“You really liked me diving that close?”

“I loved it.”

He kissed her and she felt cool and fresh from the swimming and she still tasted of the sea.

Catherine came in while they were still sitting at the bar. She was tired and quiet and polite.

At the table she said, “I went to Nice and then drove the little

Corniche and I stopped up above Villefranche and watched a battle cruiser come in and then it was late."

"You weren't very late," Marita said.

"But it was very strange," Catherine said. "All the colors were too bright. Even the grays were bright. The olive trees were glittery."

"That's the noon light," David said.

"No. I don't think so," she said. "It wasn't very nice and it was lovely when I stopped to watch the ship. She didn't look big to have such a big name."

"Please eat some of the steak," David said. "You've eaten hardly anything."

"I'm sorry," she said. "It's good. I like tournedos."

"Would you like something instead of the meat?"

"No. I'll eat the salad. Do you think we could have a bottle of the Perrier-Jouët?"

"Of course."

"It was always such a nice wine," she said. "And we were always so happy with it."

Afterward in their room Catherine said, "Don't worry, David, please. It's just speeded up so much lately."

"How?" he asked. He was stroking her forehead.

"I don't know. All of a sudden I was old this morning and it wasn't even the right time of year. Then the colors started to be false. I worried and wanted to get you taken care of."

"You take wonderful care of everybody."

"I'm going to but I was so tired and there wasn't any time and I knew it would be so humiliating if the money ran out and you had to borrow and I hadn't fixed up anything nor signed anything and just been sloppy the way I've been. Then I worried about your dog."

"My dog?"

"Yes your dog in Africa in the story. I went in the room to see if you needed anything and I read the story. While you and Marita

were talking in the other room. I didn't listen. You left your keys in the shorts you changed from."

"It's about half through," he told her.

"It's wonderful," she said. "But it frightens me. The elephant was so strange and your father too. I never liked him but I like the dog better than anyone except you David, and I'm so worried about him."

"He was a wonderful dog. You don't have to worry about him."

"Can I read about what happened to him today in the story?"

"Sure, if you want to. But he's at the shamba now and you don't need to worry about him."

"If he's all right I won't read it until you get back to him. Kibo, He had a lovely name."

"It's the name of a mountain. The other part is Mawenzi."

"You and Kibo. I love you so much. You were so much alike."

"You're feeling better, Devil."

"Probably," Catherine said. "I hope so. But it won't last. Driving this morning I was so very happy and then suddenly I was old, so old I didn't care anymore."

"You're not old."

"Yes I am. I'm older than my mother's old clothes and I won't outlive your dog. Not even in a story."

Chapter Twenty

David had finished writing and he was empty and hollow-feeling from having driven himself long past the point where he should have stopped. He did not think it mattered that day because it was the exhaustion part of the story and so he had felt the tiredness as soon as they had picked up the trail again. For a long time he had been fresher and in better shape than the two men and impatient with their slow trailing and the regular halts his father made each hour on the hour. He could have moved ahead much faster than Juma and his father but when he started to tire they were the same as ever and at noon they took only the usual five minute rest and he had seen that Juma was increasing the pace a little. Perhaps he wasn't. Perhaps it had only seemed faster but the dung was fresher now although it was not warm yet to the touch. Juma gave him the rifle to carry after they came on the last pile of dung but after an hour he looked at him and took it back. They had been climbing steadily across a slope of the mountain but now the trail went down and from a gap in the forest he saw the broken country ahead.

"Here's where the tough part starts, Davey," his father said.

It was then he knew that he should have been sent back to the shamba once he had put them on the trail. Juma had known it for a long time. His father knew it now and there was nothing to be done. It was another of his mistakes and there was nothing to do now except gamble. David looked down at the big flattened circle of the print of the elephant foot and saw where the bracken had been pressed down and where a broken stem of a flowering weed was drying beyond the break. Juma picked it up and looked at the sun.

Juma handed the broken weed to David's father and his father rolled it in his fingers. David noticed the white flowers that were drooped and drying. But they still had not dried in the sun nor shed their petals.

"It's going to be a bitch," his father said. "Let's get going." Late in the afternoon they were still tracking through the broken country. He had been sleepy now for a long time and as he watched the two men he knew that sleepiness was his real enemy and he followed their pace and tried to move through and out of the sleep that deadened him. The two men relieved each other tracking on the hour and the one who was in second place looked back at him at regular intervals to check if he was with them. When they made a dry camp at dark in the forest again he went to sleep as soon as he sat down and woke with Juma holding his moccasins and feeling his bare feet for blisters. His father had spread his coat over him and was sitting by him with a piece of cold cooked meat and two biscuits. He offered him a water bottle with cold tea.

"He'll have to feed, Davey," his father said. "Your feet are in good shape. They're as sound as Juma's. Eat this slowly and drink some tea and go to sleep again. We haven't any problem."

"I'm sorry I was so sleepy."

"You and Kibo hunted and travelled all last night. Why shouldn't you be sleepy? You can have a little more meat if you want it."

"I'm not hungry."

"Good. We're good for three days. We'll hit water again tomorrow. Plenty of creeks come off the mountain."

"Where's he going?"

"Juma thinks he knows."

"Isn't it bad?"

"Not too bad, Davey."

"I'm going back to sleep," David had said. "I don't need your coat."

"Juma and I are all right," his father said. "I always sleep warm

you know."

David was asleep even before his father said good night. Then he woke once with the moonlight on his face and he thought of the elephant with his great ears moving as he stood in the forest, his head hung down with the weight of the tusks. David thought then in the night that the hollow way he felt as he remembered him was from waking hungry. But it was not and he found that out in the next three days.

In the story he had tried to make the elephant come alive again as he and Kibo had seen him in the night when the moon had risen. Maybe I can, David thought, maybe I can. But as he locked up the day's work and went out of the room and shut the door he told himself, No, you can't do it. The elephant was old and if it had not been your father it would have been someone else. There is nothing you can do except try to write it the way that it was. So you must write each day better than you possibly can and use the sorrow that you have now to make you know how the early sorrow came. And you must always remember the things you believed because if you know them they will be there in the writing and you won't betray them. The writing is the only progress you make.

He went behind the bar and found the bottle of Haig and a cold half bottle of Perrier and made himself a drink and took it out in the big kitchen to find Madame. He told her he was going into Cannes and would not be back for lunch. She scolded him about drinking whiskey on an empty stomach and he asked her what she had cold that he could put in the empty stomach with the whiskey. She brought out some cold chicken and sliced it and put it on a plate and made an endive salad and he went into the bar and made another drink and came back to sit down at the kitchen table.

"Don't drink that now before you eat, Monsieur," Madame said.

"It's good for me," he told her. "We drank it at the mess like wine in the war."

"It's a wonder you weren't all drunkards."

“Like the French,” he said and they argued French working class drinking habits, on which they both agreed, and she teased him that his women had left him. He said that he was tired of them both and wasn’t she ready to take their place now? No, she said, he would have to show more evidence he was a man before he roused a woman of the Midi. He said he was going into Cannes where he could get a proper meal and would come back like a lion and let the women of the south take care. They kissed affectionately with the kiss of the favoured client and the brave *femme* and then David went in to take a shower, to shave and to change.

The shower made him feel good and he was cheered up from talking to Madame. I wonder what she would say if she knew what it was all about, he thought. Things had changed since the war and both Monsieur and Madame had a sense of style and they wished to move with the change. We three clients are all *de gens très bien.* So long as it pays and isn’t violent there is nothing wrong with it. The Russians are gone, the British are beginning to be poor, the Germans are ruined, and now there is this disregard of the established rules which can very well be the salvation of the whole coast. We are pioneers in opening up the summer season which is still regarded as madness. He looked at his face in the mirror with one side shaved. Still, he said to himself, you don’t need to be such a pioneer as not to shave the other side. And then he noted with careful critical distaste the almost silvery whiteness of his hair.

He heard the Bugatti come up the long slope and turn onto the gravel and stop.

Catherine came into the room. She had a scarf over her head and sunglasses on and she took them off and kissed David. He held her close and said, “How are you?”

“Not so good,” she said. “It was too hot.” She smiled at him and put her forehead on his shoulder. “I’m glad I’m home.”

He went out and made a Tom Collins and brought it in to Catherine who had finished a cold shower. She took the tall cold

glass and sipped from it and then held it against the smooth dark skin of her belly. She touched the glass to the tips of each of her breasts so they came erect and then took a long sip and held the cold glass against her belly again. “This is wonderful,” she said.

He kissed her and she said, “Oh, that’s nice. I’d forgotten about that. I don’t see any good reason why I should give that up. Do you?”

“No,”

“Well, I haven’t,” she said. “I’m not going to turn you over to someone else prematurely. That was a silly idea.”

“Get dressed and come on out,” David said.

“No. I want to have fun with you like in the old days.”

“How?”

“You know. To make you happy.”

“How happy?”

“This.”

“Be careful,” he said.

“Please.”

“All right, if you want.”

“The way it was in Grau du Roi the first time it ever happened?”

“If you want.”

“Thank you for giving me this time because—”

“Don’t talk.”

“It’s just like Grau du Roi but it’s lovelier because it’s in the daytime and we love each other more because I’d gone away. Please let’s be slow and slow and slow—”

“Yes slow.”

“Are you—”

“Yes.”

“Are you really?”

“Yes if you want.”

“Oh I want so much and you are and I have. Please be slow and let me keep it.”

“You have it.”

“Yes I do. I do have it. Oh yes I do. I do. Please come now with me. Please can you now—”

They lay on the sheets and Catherine with her brown leg over his, touching his instep lightly with her toes, rested on her elbows and lifted her mouth from his and said, “Are you glad to have me back?”

“You,” he said. “You did come back.”

“You never thought I would. Yesterday it was all gone and everything was over and now here I am. Are you happy?”

“Yes.”

“Do you remember when all I wanted was to be so dark and now I’m the darkest white girl in the world.”

“And the blondest. You’re just like ivory. That’s how I always think. You’re smooth as ivory too.”

“I’m so happy and I want to have fun with you the way we always had. But mine is mine. I’m not going to turn you over to her the way I was doing and keep nothing. That’s over.”

“It’s not awfully clear,” David said. “But you really are fine again, aren’t you?”

“I really am,” Catherine said. “I’m not gloomy or morbid or pitiful.”

“You’re nice and lovely.”

“It’s all wonderful and changed. We’re going to take turns,” Catherine said. “You’re mine today and tomorrow. And you’re Marita’s the next two days. My God, I’m hungry. This is the first time I’ve been hungry in a week.”

When David and Catherine came back from swimming in the late afternoon they drove into Cannes for the Paris papers and then sat at the cafe and read and talked before they came home. After David had changed he found Marita sitting at the bar reading. He recognized the book as his own. The one she had not read. “Did you have a good swim?” she asked.

“Yes. We swam a long way out.”

“Did you dive from the high rocks?”

“No.”

“I’m glad of that,” she said. “How is Catherine?”

“More cheerful.”

“Yes. She is very intelligent.”

“How are you? Are you all right?”

“Very well. I’m reading this book.”

“How is it?”

“I can’t tell you till day after tomorrow. I’m reading very slowly to make it last.”

“What’s that? The pact?”

“I suppose so. But I wouldn’t worry very much about the book nor how I feel about you. It’s not changed.”

“All right,” David said. “But I missed you very badly this morning.”

“Day after tomorrow,” she said. “Don’t worry.”

Chapter Twenty-One

The next day in the story was very bad because long before noon he knew that it was not just the need for sleep that made the difference between a boy and men. For the first three hours he was fresher than they were and he asked Juma for the .303 rifle to carry but Juma shook his head. He did not smile and he had always been David's best friend and had taught him to hunt. He offered it to me yesterday, David thought, and I'm in much better shape today than I was yesterday. He was too but by ten o'clock he knew the day would be bad or worse than the day before. It was as silly for him to think that he could trail with his father as to think he could fight with him. He knew too that it was not just that they were men. They were professional hunters and he knew now that was why Juma would not even waste a smile. They knew everything the elephant had done, pointed out the signs of it to each other without speaking, and when the tracking became difficult his father always yielded to Juma. When they stopped to fill the water bottles at a stream his father said, "Just last the day out, Davey." Then when they were finally past the broken country and climbing again toward the forest the tracks of the elephant turned off to the right onto an old elephant trail. He saw his father and Juma talking and when he got up to them Juma was looking back over the way they had come and then at a far distant stony island of hills in the dry country and seemed to be taking a bearing of this against the peaks of three far blue hills on the horizon.

"Juma knows where he's going now," his father explained.

"He thought he knew before but then he dropped down into this

stuff." He looked back at the country they had come through all day. "Where he's headed now is pretty good going but we'll have to climb."

They had climbed until it was dark and then made another dry camp. David had killed two spur fowl with his slingshot out of a small Bock that had walked across the trail just before the sunset. The birds had come into the old elephant trail to dust, walking neatly and plumply, and when the pebble broke the back of one and the bird began to jerk and toss with its wings thumping, another bird ran forward to peck at it and David pouched another pebble and pulled it back and sent it against the ribs of the second bird. As he ran forward to put his hand on it the other birds whirred off. Juma had looked back and smiled this time and David picked up the two birds, warm and plump and smoothly feathered and knocked their heads against the handle of his hunting knife.

Now where they were camped for the night his father said, "I've never seen that type of Francolin quite so high. You did very well to get a double on them."

Juma cooked the birds spitted on a stick over the coals of a very small fire. His father drank a whiskey and water from the cup top of his Bask as they lay and watched Juma cook. Afterward Juma gave them each a breast with the heart in it and ate the two necks and backs and the legs himself.

"It makes a great difference, Davey," his father said. "We're very well off on rations now."

"How far are we behind him?" David asked.

"We're quite close actually," his father said. "It all depends on whether he travels when the moon comes up. It's an hour later tonight and two hours later than when you found him."

"Why does Juma think he knows where he's going?"

"He wounded him and killed his *askari* not too far from here."

"When?"

"Five years ago, he says. That may mean anytime. When you

were still a *toto* he says."

"Has he been alone since then?"

"He says so. He hasn't seen him. Only heard of him."

"How big does he say he is?"

"Close to two hundred. Bigger than anything I've ever seen. He says there's only been one greater elephant and he came from near here too."

"I'd better get to sleep," David said. "I hope I'll be better tomorrow."

"You were splendid today," his father said. "I was very proud of you. So was Juma."

In the night when he woke after the moon was up he was sure they were not proud of him except perhaps for his dexterity in killing the two birds. He had found the elephant at night and followed him to see that he had both of his tusks and then returned to find the two men and put them on the trail. David knew they were proud of that. But once the deadly following started he was useless to them and a danger to their success just as Kibo had been to him when he had gone up close to the elephant in the night, and he knew they must each have hated themselves for not having sent him back when there was time. The tusks of the elephant weighed two hundred pounds apiece. Ever since these tusks had grown beyond their normal size the elephant had been hunted for them and now the three of them would kill him. David was sure that they would kill him now because he, David, had lasted through the day and kept up after the pace had destroyed him by noon. So they probably were proud of him doing that. But he had brought nothing useful to the hunt and they would have been far better off without him. Many times during the day he had wished that he had never betrayed the elephant and in the afternoon he remembered wishing that he had never seen him. Awake in the moonlight he knew that was not true.

All morning, writing, he had been trying to remember truly how

he felt and what had happened on that day. The hardest to make truly was how he had felt and keep it untinctured by how he had felt later. The details of the country were sharp and clear as the morning until the foreshortening and prolongation of exhaustion and he had written that well. But his feeling about the elephant had been the hardest part and he knew he would have to get away from it and then come back to it to be certain it was as it had been, not later, but on that day. He knew the feeling had begun to form but he had been too exhausted to remember it exactly.

Still involved in this problem and living in the story he locked up his suitcase and came out of the room onto the flagstones that led down to the terrace where Marita was sitting in a chair under one of the pines facing out toward the sea. She was reading and as he was walking barefooted she did not hear him. David looked at her and was pleased to see her. Then he remembered the preposterous situation and turned into the hotel and walked to his and Catherine's own room. She wasn't in the room and, still feeling Africa to be completely real and all of this where he was to be unreal and false, he went out on the terrace to speak to Marita.

"Good morning," he said. "Have you seen Catherine?"

"She went off somewhere," the girl said. "She said to tell you she'd be back."

Suddenly it was not unreal at all.

"You don't know where she went?"

"No," the girl said. "She went off on her bike."

"My God," David said. "She hasn't ridden a bike since we bought the Bug."

"That's what she said. She's taking it up again. Did you have a good morning?"

"I don't know. I'll know tomorrow."

"Are you eating breakfast?"

"I don't know. It's late."

"I wish you would."

"I'll go in and get cleaned up," he told her.

He had taken a shower and was shaving when Catherine came in. She was wearing an old Grau du Roi shirt and short linen slacks chopped off below the knees and she was hot and her shirt was wet through.

"It's wonderful," she said. "But I'd forgotten what it does to your upper thighs when you climb."

"Did you ride very far, Devil?"

"Six kilometers," she said. "It was nothing but I'd forgotten about the *côtes."*

"It's awfully hot to ride now unless you go in the very early mornings," David said. "I'm glad you started again though."

She was under the shower now and when she came out she said, "Now see how dark we are together. We're just the way we planned."

"You're darker."

"Not much. You're terribly dark too. Look at us together." They looked at each other standing touching in the long mirror on the door.

"Oh you like us," she said. "That's nice. So do I. Touch here and see."

She stood very straight and he put his hand on her breasts. "I'll put on one of my tight shirts so you can tell what I think about things," she said. "Isn't it funny our hair hasn't any color at all when it's wet? It's pale as seaweed."

She took a comb and combed her hair straight back so it looked as though she had just come out of the sea.

"I'm going to wear mine this way now again," she said. "Like Grau du Roi and here in the spring."

"I like it across your forehead."

"I'm tired of that. But I can do it if you like. Do you think we could go into town and have breakfast at the cafe?"

"Haven't you had breakfast?"

“I wanted to wait for you.”

“All right,” he said. “Let’s go in and get breakfast. I’m hungry too.”

They had a very good breakfast of café au lait, brioche and strawberry jam and *oeufs au plat avec jambon* and when they were finished Catherine asked, “Would you come over with me to Jean’s? It’s the day I go to get my hair washed and I’m going to have it cut.”

“I’ll wait here for you.”

“Wouldn’t you please come? You did it before and it wasn’t bad for anybody.”

“No, Devil. I did once but that was just once. Like getting tattooed or something. Don’t ask me to.”

“It doesn’t mean anything except to me. I want us to be just the same.”

“We can’t be the same.”

“Yes we could if you’d let us.”

“I really don’t want to do it.”

“Not if I say it’s all I want?”

“Why can’t you want something that makes sense?”

“I do. But I want us to be the same and you almost are and it wouldn’t be any trouble to do. The sea’s done all the work.”

“Then let the sea do it.”

“I want it for today.”

“Then you’ll be happy I suppose.”

“I’m happy now because you’re going to do it and I’ll stay happy. You love how I look. You know you do. Think of it that way.”

“It’s silly.”

“No it isn’t. Not when it’s you and you do it to please me.”

“How badly will you feel if I don’t?”

“I don’t know. But very.”

“All right,” he said. “It really means all that to you?”

“Yes,” she said. “Oh, thank you. It won’t take very long this time. I told Jean we’d be there and he’s staying open for us.”

“Are you always that confident I’ll do things?”

“I knew you would if you knew how much I wanted it.”

“I wanted very much not to. You shouldn’t ask it.”

“You won’t care. It’s nothing and afterwards it will be fun. Don’t worry about Marita.”

“What about her?”

“She said that if you wouldn’t do it for me to ask you if you’d do it for her.”

“Don’t make things up.”

“No. She said it this morning.”

“I wish you could see yourself,” Catherine said.

“I’m glad I can’t.”

“I wish you’d looked in the glass.”

“I couldn’t.”

“Just look at me. That’s how you are and I did it and there’s nothing you can do now. That’s how you look.”

“We couldn’t really have done that,” David said. “I couldn’t look the way you do.”

“Well, we did,” Catherine said. “And you do. So you better start to like it.”

“We can’t have done that, Devil.”

“Yes we did. You knew it too. You just wouldn’t look. And we’re damned now. I was and now you are. Look at me and see how much you like it.”

David looked at her eyes that he loved and at her dark face and the incredibly flat ivory color of her hair and at how happy she looked and he began to realize what a completely stupid thing he had permitted.

Chapter Twenty-Two

He did not think that he could go on with the story that morning and for a long time he could not. But he knew that he must and finally he had started and they were following the spoor of the elephant on an old elephant trail that was a hard packed worn road through the forest. It looked as though elephants had travelled it ever since the lava had cooled from the mountain and the trees had first grown tall and close. Juma was very confident and they moved fast. Both his father and Juma seemed very sure of themselves and the going on the elephant road was so easy that Juma gave him the .303 to carry as they went on through the broken light of the forest. Then they lost the trail in smoking piles of fresh dung and the flat round prints of a herd of elephants that had come onto the elephant road from the heavy forest on the left of the trail. Juma had taken the .303 from David angrily. It was afternoon before they had worked up to the herd and around it seeing the gray bulks through the trees and the movement of the big ears and the searching trunks coiling and uncoiling, the crash of branches broken, the crash of trees pushed over and the rumbling in the bellies of the elephants and the slap and thud of the dung falling.

They had found the trail of the old bull finally and when it turned off onto a smaller elephant road Juma had looked at David's father and grinned showing his filed teeth and his father had nodded his head. They looked as though they had a dirty secret, just as they had looked when he had found them that night at the shamba.

It was not very long before they came on the secret. It was off to

the right in the forest and the tracks of the old bull led to it. It was a skull as high as David's chest and white from the sun and the rains. There was a deep depression in the forehead and ridges ran from between the bare white eye sockets and Bared out in empty broken holes where the tusks had been chopped away. Juma pointed out where the great elephant they were trailing had stood while he looked down at the skull and where his trunk had moved it a little way from the place it had rested on the ground and where the points of his tusks had touched the ground beside it. He showed David the single hole in the big depression in the white bone of forehead and then the four holes close together in the bone around the ear hole. He grinned at David and at his father and took a .303 solid from his pocket and fitted the nose into the hole in the bone of the forehead.

"Here is where Juma wounded the big bull," his father said. "This was his *askari.* His friend, really, because he was a big bull too. He charged and Juma knocked him down and finished him in the ear."

Juma was pointing out the scattered bones and how the big bull had walked around among them. Juma and David's father were both very pleased with what they had found.

"How long do you suppose he and his friend had been together?" David asked his father.

"I haven't the faintest idea," his father said. "Ask Juma."

"You ask him please."

His father and Juma spoke together and Juma had looked at David and laughed.

"Probably four or five times your life he says," David's father told him. "He doesn't know or care really."

I care, David thought. I saw him in the moonlight and he was alone but I had Kibo. Kibo has me too. The bull wasn't doing anyone any harm and now we've tracked him to where he came to see his dead friend and now we're going to kill him. It's my fault. I

betrayed him.

Now Juma had worked out the trail and motioned to his father and they started on.

My father doesn't need to kill elephants to live, David thought. Juma would not have found him if I had not seen him. He had his chance at him and all he did was wound him and kill his friend. Kibo and I found him and I never should have told them and I should have kept him secret and had him always and let them stay drunk with their *bibis* at the beer shamba. Juma was so drunk we could not wake him. I'm going to keep everything a secret always. I'll never tell them anything again. If they kill him Juma will drink his share of the ivory or just buy himself another god damn wife. Why didn't you help the elephant when you could? All you had to do was not go on the second day. No, that wouldn't have stopped them. Juma would have gone on. You never should have told them. Never, never tell them. Try and remember that. Never tell anyone anything ever. Never tell anyone anything again.

His father waited for him to come up and said very gently, "He rested here. He's not travelling as he was. We'll be up on him anytime now."

"Fuck elephant hunting," David had said very quietly.

"What's that?" his father asked.

"Fuck elephant hunting," David said softly.

"Be careful you don't fuck it up," his father had said to him and looked at him flatly.

That's one thing, David had thought. He's not stupid. He knows all about it now and he will never trust me again. That's good. I don't want him to because I'll never ever tell him or anybody anything again never anything again. Never ever never.

That was where he stopped in the hunt that morning. He knew he did not have it right yet. He had not gotten the enormity of the skull as they had come onto it in the forest nor the tunnels underneath it in the earth that the beetles had made and that had

been revealed like deserted galleries or catacombs when the elephant had moved the skull. He had not made the great length of the whitened bones nor how the elephant's tracks had moved around the scene of the killing and how following them he had been able to see the elephant as he had moved and then had been able to see what the elephant had seen. He had not gotten the great width of the one elephant trail that was a perfect road through the forest nor the worn smooth rubbing trees nor the way other trails intersected so that they were like the map of the Metro in Paris. He had not made the light in the forest where the trees came together at their tops and he had not clarified certain things that he must make as they were then, not as he recalled them now. The distances did not matter since all distances changed and how you remembered them was how they were. But his change of feeling toward Juma and toward his father and toward the elephant was complicated by the exhaustion that had bred it. Tiredness brought the beginning of understanding. The understanding was beginning and he was realizing it as he wrote. But the dreadful true understanding was all to come and he must not show it by arbitrary statements of rhetoric but by remembering the actual things that had brought it. Tomorrow he would get the things right and then go on.

He put the cahiers of manuscript away in the suitcase and locked it and came out the door of his room and walked along the front of the hotel to where Marita was reading.

"Do you want breakfast?" she asked.

"I think I'd like a drink."

"Let's have it at the bar," she said. "It's cooler."

They went in and sat down on stools and David poured from the Haig Pinch bottle into a glass and filled it up with cold Perrier.

"What became of Catherine?"

"She left very happy and gay."

"And how are you?"

“Happy and shy and rather quiet.”

“Too shy for me to kiss you?”

They held each other and he could feel himself start to be whole again. He had not known just how greatly he had been divided and separated because once he started to work he wrote from an inner core which could not be split nor even marked nor scratched. He knew about this and it was his strength since all the rest of him could be riven.

They sat at the bar while the boy laid the table and the first coolness of fall was in the breeze from the sea and then sitting at the table under the pines they felt it again as they ate and drank.

“This cool breeze comes all the way from Kurdistan,” David said. “The equinoctial storms will be coming soon.”

“They won’t come today,” the girl said. “We don’t have to worry about them today.”

“There hasn’t been a blow of any kind since when we met in Cannes at the cafe.”

“Can you still remember things that long ago?”

“It seems further away than the war.”

“I had the war the last three days,” the girl said. “I just left it this morning.”

“I never think about it,” David said.

“Now I’ve read it,” Marita told him, “but I don’t understand about you. You never made clear what you believed.”

He filled her glass and then refilled his own.

“I didn’t know until afterwards,” he said. “So I didn’t try to act as though I did. I suspended thinking about it while it was happening. I only felt and saw and acted and thought tactically. That’s why it’s not a better book. Because I wasn’t more intelligent.”

“It is a very good book. The flying parts are wonderful and the feeling for the other people and for the planes themselves.”

“I’m good on other people and on technical and tactical things,” David said. “I don’t mean to talk wet or to brag. But, Marita,

nobody knows about himself when he is really involved. Yourself isn't worth considering. It would be shameful at the time."

"But afterwards you know."

"Sure. Sometimes."

"Can I read the narrative?"

David poured wine in the glasses again. "How much did she tell you?"

"She said she told me everything. She tells things very well you know."

"I'd rather you didn't read it," David said. "All it would do is make trouble. I didn't know there would be you when I wrote it and I can't help her telling you things but I don't have to have you read about them too."

"Then I mustn't read it?"

"I wish you wouldn't. I don't want to give you orders."

"Then I have to tell you," the girl said.

"She let you read it?"

"Yes. She said I should."

"God damn her."

"She didn't do it to do wrong. It was when she was so worried."

"So you read it all?"

"Yes. It's wonderful. It's so much better than the last book and now the stories are so much better than it or than anything."

"What about the Madrid part?" He looked at her and she looked up at him and then moistened her lips and did not look away and she said very carefully, "I knew all about that because I'm just the way you are."

When they were lying together Marita said, "You don't think about her when you make love to me?"

"No, stupid."

"You don't want me to do her things? Because I know them all and I can do them."

"Stop talking and just feel."

“I can do them better than she can.”

“Stop talking.”

“Don’t think you have to—”

“Don’t talk.”

“But you don’t have to—”

“No one has to but we are—”

They lay holding each other close and hard and then gently finally and Marita said, “I have to go away but I’ll be back. Please sleep for me.”

She kissed him and when she came back he was asleep. He had meant to wait for her but he had fallen asleep while he waited. She lay down by him and kissed him and when he did not wake she lay by him very quietly and tried to sleep too. But she was not sleepy and she kissed him very softly again and then commenced to play with him very gently while she pushed her breasts against him. He stirred in his sleep and she lay now with her head down below his chest and played softly and searchingly making small intimacies and discoveries.

It was a long cool afternoon and David slept and when he woke Marita was gone and he heard the two girls’ voices on the terrace. He dressed and unbolted the door to his working room and then came out from the door of that room onto the flagstones. There was no one on the terrace except the waiter who was taking in the tea things and he found the girls in the bar.

Chapter Twenty-Three

The two girls were both sitting at the bar with a bottle of Perrier-Jouët in a bucket with ice and they both looked fresh and lovely.

"It's just like meeting an ex-husband," Catherine said. "It makes me feel very sophisticated." She had never looked gayer or more lovely. "I must say it agrees with you." She looked at David in mock appraisal.

"Do you think he's all right?" Marita said. She looked at David and blushed.

"And well you might blush," Catherine said. "Look at her, David."

"She looks very well," David said. "So do you."

"She looks about sixteen," Catherine said. "She said she told you about reading the narrative."

"I think you should have asked me," David said.

"I know I should," Catherine said. "But I started to read it for myself and then it was so interesting I thought Heiress ought to read it too."

''I'd have said no."

"But the point is," Catherine said, "if he ever says no about anything, Marita, just keep right on. It doesn't mean a thing."

"I don't believe it," Marita said. She smiled at David.

"That's because he hasn't written the narrative up to date. When he does you'll find out."

"I'm through with the narrative," David said.

"That's dirty," Catherine said. "That was my present and our project."

“You must write it, David,” the girl said. “You will won’t you?”

“She wants to be in it, David,” Catherine said. “And it will be so much better when you have a dark girl too.”

David poured himself a glass of the champagne. He saw Marita look at him, a warning, and he said to Catherine, “I’ll go on with it when I finish the stories. What did you do with your day?”

“I had a fine day. I made decisions and planned things.”

“Oh God,” David said.

“They’re all straightforward plans,” Catherine said. “You don’t have to groan about them. You’ve been doing just whatever you wanted to do all day and I was pleased. But I have a right to make a few plans.”

“What sort of plans?” David asked. His voice sounded very flat. “First we have to start seeing about getting the book out. I’m going to have to have the manuscript typed up to where it is now and see about getting illustrations. I have to see the artists and make the arrangements.”

“You’ve had a very busy day,” David said. “You know, don’t you, that you don’t get manuscripts typed until whoever writes them has gone over them and has them ready for typing?”

“That isn’t necessary because I only need a rough draft to show the artists.”

“I see. And if I don’t want it copied yet?”

“Don’t you want it brought out? I do. And someone has to get started on something practical.”

“Who are the artists you thought up today?”

“Different ones for different parts. Marie Laurencin, Pascen, Derain, Dufy and Picasso.”

“For Christ sake, Derain.”

“Can’t you see a nice Laurencin of Marita and me in the car when we stopped the first time by the Loup on the way to Nice?”

“Nobody’s written that.”

“Well write it then. It’s certainly much more interesting and

instructive than a lot of natives in a kraal or whatever you call it covered with flies and scabs in Central Africa with your drunken father staggering around smelling of sour beer and not knowing which ones of the little horrors he had fathered."

"There goes the ball game," David said.

"What did you say, David?" Marita said.

"I said thank you very much for having lunch with me," David told her.

"Why don't you thank her for the rest of it?" Catherine said. "She really must have done something impressive to make you sleep as though you were dead until the absolute end of the afternoon. Thank her for that at least."

"Thank you for going swimming," David said to the girl.

"Oh did you swim?" Catherine said. "I'm glad you swam."

"We swam quite far," Marita said. "And we had a very good lunch. Did you have a good lunch, Catherine?"

"I think so," Catherine said. "I don't remember."

"Where were you?" Marita asked gently.

"Saint Raphael," Catherine said. "I remember stopping there but I can't remember about lunch. I never notice when I eat by myself. But I'm quite sure I did have lunch there. I know I intended to."

"Was it nice driving back?" Marita asked.

"It was such a cool lovely afternoon."

"I don't know," Catherine said. "I didn't notice. I was thinking about making the book and getting it started. We have to get it started. I don't know why David started to be difficult the moment I commenced to put a little order into it. The whole thing has dragged along in such a haphazard way that I was suddenly ashamed of all of us."

"Poor Catherine," Marita said. "But now that you have it all planned you must feel better."

"I do," Catherine said. "I felt so happy when I came in. I knew I'd made you happy and I'd accomplished something practical too

and then David made me feel like an idiot or a leper. I can't help it if I'm practical and sensible."

"I know, Devil," David said. "I just didn't want to get the work mixed up."

"But it's you who mixed it up," Catherine said. "Can't you see? Jumping back and forth trying to write stories when all you had to do was keep on with the narrative that meant so much to all of us. It was going so well too and we were just coming to the most exciting parts. Someone has to show you that the stories are just your way of escaping your duty."

Marita looked at him again and he knew what she was trying to tell him and he said, "I have to go get cleaned up. You tell Marita about it and I'll be back."

"We have other things to talk about," Catherine said. "I'm sorry I was rude about you and Marita. I couldn't be happier about you really."

David took everything that had been said in with him to the bathroom where he had a shower and changed into a newly washed fisherman's sweater and slacks. It was quite cool now in the evening and Marita was sitting at the bar looking at *Vogue*.

"She's gone down to see about your room," Marita said.

"How is she?"

"How should I know, David? She's a very great publisher now. She's given up sex. It doesn't interest her anymore. It's childish really, she says. She doesn't know how it could ever have meant anything to her. But she may decide to have an affair with another woman if she ever takes it up again. There's quite a bit about another woman."

"Christ I never thought it would go this way."

"Don't," Marita said. "No matter what or how it is I love you and you are going to write tomorrow."

Catherine came in and said, "You look wonderful together and I'm so proud. I feel as though I'd invented you. Was he good today,

Marita?"

"We had a nice lunch," Marita said. "Please be fair, Catherine."

"Oh I know he's a satisfactory lover," Catherine said. "He's always that. That's just like his martinis or how he swims or skis or Hew probably. I never saw him with a plane. Everyone says he was marvelous. It's like acrobats really I suppose and just as dull. I wasn't asking about that."

"You were very good to let us spend a day together, Catherine," Marita said.

"You can spend the rest of your lives together," Catherine said. "If you don't bore each other. I have no further need of either of you."

David was watching her in the mirror and she looked calm, handsome and normal. He could see Marita looking at her very sadly.

"I do like to look at you though and I'd like to hear you talk if you'd ever open your mouths."

"How do you do," said David.

"That was quite a good effort," Catherine said. "I'm very well."

"Have any new plans?" David asked. He felt as though he were hailing a ship.

"Only what I've told you," Catherine went on. "They'll probably keep me quite busy."

"What was all the guff about another woman?"

He felt Marita kick him and he put his foot on hers to acknowledge.

"That's not guff," Catherine said. "I want to have one more try to see if I've missed anything. I might have."

"All of us are fallible," David said and Marita kicked him again.

"I want to see," Catherine said. "I know enough about that now so I should be able to tell. Don't worry about your dark girl. She's not my type at all. She's yours. She's what you like and very nice it is but not for me. I'm not attracted to the gamin type."

“Perhaps I am a gamin,” Marita said. “That’s a very polite word for that part.”

“But I’m also more of a woman than you are Catherine.”

“Go ahead and show David what sort of gamin you are. He’d like it.”

“He knows what sort of woman I am.”

“That’s splendid,” Catherine said. “I’m glad you both found your tongues finally. I do prefer conversation.”

“You aren’t really a woman at all,” Marita said.

“I know it,” Catherine said. “I’ve tried to explain it to David often enough. Isn’t that true, David?”

David looked at her and said nothing.

“Didn’t I?”

“Yes,” he said.

“I did try and I broke myself in pieces in Madrid to be a girl and all it did was break me in pieces,” Catherine said. “Now all I am is through. You’re a girl and a boy both and you really are. You don’t have to change and it doesn’t kill you and I’m not. And now I’m nothing. All I wanted was for David and you to be happy. Everything else I invent.”

Marita said, “I know it and I try to tell David.”

“I know you do. But you don’t have to be loyal to me or to anything. Don’t do it. Nobody would anyway and you probably aren’t really. But I tell you not to be. I want you to be happy and make him happy. You can too and I can’t and I know it.”

“You’re the finest girl there is,” Marita said.

“I’m not. I’m finished before I ever started.”

“No. I’m the one,” Marita said. “I was stupid and awful.”

“You weren’t stupid. Everything you said was true. Let’s stop talking and be friends. Can we?”

“Can we please?” Marita asked her.

“I want to,” Catherine said. “And not be such a tragic bully. Please take your time about the book, David. You know all I want is

for you to write the best you can. That's what we started with. I'm over it now whatever this one was."

"You were just tired," David said. "I don't think you ate any lunch either."

"Probably not," Catherine said. "But I may have. Can we forget it all now though and just be friends?"

So they were friends; whatever friends are, David thought, and tried not think but talked and listened in the unreality that reality had become. He had heard each one speak about the other and he knew each must know what the other thought and probably what they each had told him. In that way they really were friends, understanding in their basic disagreement, trusting in their complete distrust and enjoying one another's company. He enjoyed their company too but tonight he'd had enough of it.

Tomorrow he must go back into his own country, the one that Catherine was jealous of and that Marita loved and respected. He had been happy in the country of the story and knew that it was too good to last and now he was back from what he cared about into the overpopulated vacancy of madness that had taken, now, the new turn of exaggerated practicality. He was tired of it and he was tired of Marita's collaborating with her enemy. Catherine was not his enemy except as she was himself in the unfinding unrealizable quest that is love and so was her own enemy. She needs an enemy so badly always that she has to keep one near and she's the nearest and the easiest to attack knowing the weaknesses and strengths and all the faults of our defenses. She turns my flank so skillfully then finds it is her own and the last fighting is always in a swirl and the dust that rises is our own dust.

Catherine wanted to play backgammon with Marita after dinner. They always played it seriously and for money and when Catherine went to get the board Marita said to David, "Please don't come to my room tonight after all."

"Good."

"Do you understand?"

"Let's skip that word," David said. His coldness had come back as the time for working moved closer.

"Are you angry?"

"Yes," David said.

"At me?"

"No."

"You can't be angry with someone who's ill."

"You haven't lived very long," David said. "That's exactly who everyone is always angry with. Get ill sometime yourself and see."

"I wish you wouldn't be angry."

"I wish I'd never seen any of you."

"Please don't, David."

"You know it isn't true. I'm only getting ready to work."

He went into their bedroom and put on the reading light on his side of the bed and made himself comfortable and read one of the W. H. Hudson books. It was *Nature in Downland* and he had taken it to read because it had the most unpromising title. He knew enough to know a time was coming when he'd need all the books and he was saving the best ones. But once past the title of this one nothing in it bored him. He was happy to read and he was back out of his life and with Hudson and his brother riding their horses into the tumbled whiteness of breast-high thistledown in the moonlight and gradually the click of dice and the low sound of the girls' voices became real again too so that when, after a time, he went out to make himself a whiskey and Perrier to take back to his reading they seemed, when he saw them playing, to be actual human beings doing something normal and not figures in some unbelievable play he had been brought unwillingly to attend.

He went back to the room and read and drank his whiskey and Perrier very slowly and he had undressed and turned the light off and was almost asleep when he heard Catherine come in to the bedroom. It seemed to him that she was gone a long time in the

bathroom before he felt her come to bed and he lay still and breathed steadily and hoped he might really go to sleep.

"Are you awake, David?" she asked.

"I think so."

"Don't wake up," she said. "Thank you for sleeping here."

"I usually do."

"You don't have to."

"Yes I do."

"I'm glad you did. Good night."

"Good night."

"Would you kiss me good night?"

"Sure," he said.

He kissed her and it was Catherine as she had been before when she had seemed to come back to him for a while.

"I'm sorry I was such a failure again."

"Let's not talk about things."

"Do you hate me?"

"No."

"Can we start again the way I'd planned things?"

"I don't think so."

"Then why did you come in here?"

"This is where I belong."

"No other reason?"

"I thought you might be lonely."

"I was."

"Everybody's lonely," David said.

"It's terrible to be in bed together and be lonely."

"There isn't any solution," David said. "All your plans and schemes are worthless."

"I didn't give it a chance."

"It was all crazy anyway. I'm sick of crazy things. You're not the only one gets broken up."

"I know. But can't we try it again just once more and I really be

good? I can. I nearly was."

"I'm sick of all of it, Devil. Sick all the way through me."

"Wouldn't you try it just once more for her and for me both?"

"It doesn't work and I'm sick of it."

"She said you had a fine day and that you were really cheerful and not depressed. Won't you try it once more for both of us? I want it so much."

"You want everything so much and when you get it it's over and you don't give a damn."

"I was just overconfident this time and then I get insufferable. Please can we try it again?"

"Let's go to sleep, Devil, and not talk about it."

"Kiss me again please," Catherine said. "I'll go to sleep because I know you'll do it. You always do everything I want because you really want to do it too."

"You only want things for you, Devil."

"That's not true, David. Anyway I am you and her. That's what I did it for. I'm everybody. You know about that don't you?"

"Go to sleep, Devil."

"I will. But would you please kiss me again first so that we won't be lonely?"

Chapter Twenty-Four

In the morning he was on the far slope of the mountain again. The elephant was no longer travelling as he had been but was moving aimlessly now, feeding occasionally and David had known they were getting close to him. He tried to remember how he had felt. He had no love for the elephant yet. He must remember that. He had only a sorrow that had come from his own tiredness that had brought an understanding of age. Though being too young, he had learned how it must be to be too old. He was lonesome for Kibo and thinking of Juma killing the elephant's friend had turned him against Juma and made the elephant his brother. He knew then how much it meant to him to have seen the elephant in the moonlight and for him to have followed him with Kibo and come close to him in the clearing so that he had seen both of the great tusks. But he did not know that nothing would ever be as good as that again. Now he knew they would kill the elephant and there was nothing he could do about it. He had betrayed the elephant when he had gone back to tell them at the shamba. They would kill me and they would kill Kibo too if we had ivory, he had thought and known it was untrue. Probably the elephant is going to find where he was born now and they'll kill him there. That's all they'd need to make it perfect. They'd like to have killed him where they killed his friend. That would be a big joke. That would have pleased them. The god damned friend killers.

They had moved to the edge of thick cover now and the elephant was close ahead. David could smell him and they could all hear him pulling down branches and the snapping that they made.

His father put his hand on David's shoulder to move him back and have him wait outside and then he took a big pinch of ashes from the pouch in his pocket and tossed it in the air. The ash barely slanted toward them as it fell and his father nodded at Juma and bent down to follow him into the thick cover. David watched their backs and their asses go in and out of sight. He could not hear them move.

David had stood still and listened to the elephant feeding. He could smell him as strongly as he had the night in the moonlight when he had worked up close to him and had seen his wonderful tusks. Then as he stood there it was silent and he could not smell the elephant. Then there had been a high squealing and smashing and a shot by the .303 then the heavy rocking double report of his father's .450, then the smashing and crashing had gone on going steadily away and he had gone into the heavy growth and found Juma standing shaken and bleeding from his forehead all down over his face and his father white and angry.

"He went for Juma and knocked him over," his father had said. "Juma hit him in the head."

"Where did you hit him?"

"Where I fucking well could," his father had said. "Get on the fucking blood spoor."

There was plenty of blood. One stream as high as David's head that had squirted bright on trunks and leaves and vines and another much lower that was dark and foul with stomach content.

"Lung and gut shot," his father said. "We'll find him down or anchored—I hope the hell," he added.

They found him anchored, in such suffering and despair that he could no longer move. He had crashed through the heavy cover where he had been feeding and crossed a path of open forest and David and his father had run along the heavily splashed blood trail. Then the elephant had gone on into thick forest and David had seen him ahead standing gray and huge against the trunk of a tree. David

could only see his stern and then his father moved ahead of him and he followed and they came alongside the elephant as though he was a ship and David saw the blood coming from his Ranks and running down his sides and then his father raised his rifle and fired and the elephant turned his head with the great tusks moving heavy and slow and looked at them and when his father fired the second barrel the elephant seemed to sway like a felled tree and came smashing down toward them. But he was not dead. He had been anchored and now he was down with his shoulder broken. He did not move but his eye was alive and looked at David. He had very long eyelashes and his eye was the most alive thing David had ever seen.

"Shoot him in the ear hole with the three oh three," his father said. "Go on."

"You shoot him," David had said.

Juma had come up limping and bloody, the skin of his forehead hanging down over his left eye, the bone of his nose showing and one ear torn and had taken the rifle from David without speaking and pushed the muzzle almost into the ear hole and fired twice jerking the bolt and driving it forward angrily. The eye of the elephant had opened wide on the first shot and then started to glaze and blood came out of the ear and ran in two bright streams down the wrinkled gray hide. It was a different colored blood and David had thought I must remember that and he had but it had never been of any use to him. Now all the dignity and majesty and all the beauty was gone from the elephant and he was a huge wrinkled pile.

"Well we got him, Davey, thanks to you," his father had said. "Now we'd better get a fire going so I can put Juma back together again. Come here you bloody Humpty Dumpty. Those tusks will keep."

Juma had come to him grinning bringing the tail of the elephant that had no hairs on it at all. They had made a dirty joke and then

his father had begun to speak rapidly in Swahili:

How far to water? How far will you have to go to get people to get those tusks out of here? How are you, you worthless old pig fucker? What have you broken?

Then with the answers known his father had said, “You and I will go back to get the packs where we dropped them when we went in after him. Juma can get wood and have the fire ready. The medical kit is in my pack. We have to get the packs before it’s dark. He won’t infect. It’s not like claw wounds. Let’s go.”

His father had known how he had felt about the elephant and that night and in the next few days he had tried if not to convert him to bring him back to the boy he had been before he had come to the knowledge that he hated elephant hunting. David had put no statement of his father’s intention, which had never been stated, in the story but had only used the happenings, the disgusts, the events and feelings of the butchering, and the work of chopping out the tusks and of the rough surgery on Juma disguised by mockery and railery to keep the pain in contempt and reduce its stature since there were no drugs. The added responsibility David was given and the trust that was offered him and not accepted he had put in the story without pointing their significance. He had tried to make the elephant alive beneath the tree anchored in his final anguish and drowning in the blood that had flowed so many times before but always staunched and now was rising in him so he could not breathe, the great heart pumping it to drown him as he watched the man who came to finish him. David had been so proud the elephant had scented Juma and charged him instantly. He would have killed Juma if his father had not fired into him so that he had thrown Juma into the trees with his trunk and charged on with the death in him, feeling it as only another wound until the blood welled up and he could not breathe against it. That evening as David had sat by the fire he had looked at Juma with his stitched up face and his broken ribs that he tried to breathe without and wondered if the

elephant had recognized him when he had tried to kill him. He hoped he had. The elephant was his hero now as his father had been for a long time and he had thought, I did not believe he could do it when he was so old and tired. He would have killed Juma too. But he didn't look at me as though he wanted to kill me. He only looked sad the same way I felt. He visited his old friend on the day he died.

It was a very young boy's story, he knew, when he had finished it. He read it over and saw the gaps he must fill in to make it so that whoever read it would feel it was truly happening as it was read and he marked the gaps in the margin.

He remembered how the elephant lost all dignity as soon as his eye had ceased to be alive and how when his father and he had returned with the packs the elephant had already started to swell even in the cool evening. There was no more true elephant, only the gray wrinkled swelling dead body and the huge great mottled brown and yellow tusks that they had killed him for. The tusks were stained with the dried blood and he scraped some of it off with his thumbnail like a dried piece of sealing wax and put it in the pocket of his shirt. That was all he took from the elephant except the beginning of the knowledge of loneliness.

After the butchery his father tried to talk to him that night by the fire.

"He was a murderer you know, Davey," he had said. "Juma says nobody knows how many people he has killed."

"They were all trying to kill him weren't they?"

"Naturally," his father had said, "with that pair of tusks."

"How could he be a murderer then?"

"Just as you like," his father had said. "I'm sorry you got so mixed up about him."

"I wish he'd killed Juma," David had said.

"I think that's carrying it a little far," his father said. "Juma's your friend you know."

“Not anymore.”

“No need to tell him so.”

“He knows it,” David had said.

“I think you misjudge him,” his father said and they had left it there.

Then when they were finally back safely with the tusks after all the things that had happened and the tusks were propped against the wall of the stick and mud house leaning there with their points touching, the tusks so tall and thick that no one could believe them even when they touched them and no one, not even his father, could reach to the top of the bend where they curved in for the points to meet, there when Juma and his father and he were heroes and Kibo was a hero’s dog, and the men who had carried the tusks were heroes, already slightly drunk heroes and to be drunker, his father had said, “Do you want to make peace Davey?”

“All right,” he said because he knew this was the start of the never telling that he had decided on.

“I’m so glad,” his father said. “It’s so much simpler and better.”

Then they sat on old men’s stools under the shade of the great fig tree with the tusks against the wall of the hut and drank native beer from gourd cups that were brought by a young girl and her younger brother, no longer a detested nuisance but the servant of heroes, sitting in the dust by the heroic dog of a hero who held an old cockerel newly promoted to the standing of the heroes’ favorite rooster. They sat there and drank beer while the big drum started and the *Ngoma* began to build.

He came out of the working room and he was happy and empty and proud and Marita was waiting for him on the terrace sitting in the sun of the bright early fall morning that he had not known existed. It was a perfect morning, still and cool. The sea below was a flat calm and across the bay was the white curve of Cannes with the dark mountains behind it.

“I love you very much,” he said to the dark girl as she stood up.

He put his arms around her and kissed her and she said, “You finished it.”

“Sure,” he said. “Why not?”

“I love you and I’m so proud,” she said. They walked out and looked at the sea with their arms around each other.

“How are you girl?”

“I’m very well and very happy,” Marita said. “Did you mean it about loving me or was it just the morning?”

“It was the morning,” David said and kissed her again.

“Can I read the story?”

“It’s too lovely a day.”

“Can’t I read it so I can feel like you do and not just happy because you’re happy like I was your dog?”

He gave her the key and when she brought the notebooks and read the story at the bar David read it sitting beside her. He knew it was ill mannered and stupid. He had never done this before with anyone and it was against everything he believed about writing but he did not think of that except at the moment when he put his arm around the girl and looked at the writing on the lined paper. He could not help wanting to read it with her and he could not help sharing what he had never shared and what he had believed could not and should not be shared.

When she finished reading Marita put her arms around David and kissed him so hard that she drew blood from his lip. He looked at her and tasted his blood absentmindedly and smiled.

“I’m sorry David,” she said. “Please forgive me. I’m so very happy and prouder than you are.”

“Is it all right?” he said. “Can you smell the shamba smell and the clean smell of hut inside and feel the smoothness of the old men chairs? It’s really clean in the hut and the earth floor is swept.”

“Of course it is. You had it in the other story. I can see the angle of the head of Kibo the heroic dog too. You were such a lovely hero. Did the blood make a stain in your pocket?”

“Yes. It softened when I sweated.”

“Let’s go to town and celebrate the day,” Marita said. “There’s a lot of things that we can do today.”

David stopped at the bar and poured Haig Pinch and then cold Perrier into a glass and brought it with him to the room where he drank half of it and took a cold shower. Then he pulled on slacks and a shirt and put on *alpargatas* to go into town. He felt the story was good and felt even better about Marita. Neither had been diminished by the sharpening of perception he had now, and clarity had come with no sadness.

Catherine was doing whatever she was doing and would do whatever she would do. He looked out and felt the old happy carelessness. It was a day for flying actually. He wished there was a field where he could rent a plane and take Marita up and show her what you could do with a day like this. She might like it. But there isn’t any field here. So forget that. It would be fun though. So would skiing. That’s only two months away if you want it. Christ, it was good to finish today and have her there. Marita there with no damned jealousy of the work and have her know what you were reaching for and how far you went. She really knows and it’s not faked. I do love her and you make a note of it, whiskey, and you witness it for me, Perrier old boy old Perrier, I have been faithful to you, Perrier, in my fucking fashion. It feels very good when you feel so good. It’s a stupid feeling but it fits on this day so put it on.

“Come on girl,” he said to Marita at the door of her room. “What’s holding you up besides your beautiful legs?”

“I’m ready, David,” she said. She had on a tight sweater and slacks and her face was shining. She brushed her dark hair and looked at him.

“It’s wonderful when you’re so gay.”

“It’s such a good day,” he said. “And we’re so lucky.”

“Do you think so?” she said as they walked to the car. “Do you think we’re really lucky?”

“Yes,” he said. “I think it changed this morning or maybe in the night.”

Book Four

Chapter Twenty-Five

Catherine's car was in the driveway of the hotel when they drove up. It was parked on the right side of the gravelled approach. David stopped the Isotta behind it and he and Marita got out and walked down the drive past the small, low empty blue car and onto the flagstones of the walk without speaking.

They passed David's room with the locked door and the open windows and Marita stopped outside of her door and said, "Good bye."

"What are you doing this afternoon?" he asked.

"I don't know," she said. "I'll be here."

He walked on down to the patio of the hotel and went in the main door. Catherine was sitting at the bar reading the Paris *Herald* with a glass and half a bottle of wine beside her on the bar. She looked up at him.

"What brought you back?" she asked.

"We had lunch in town and came on up," David said.

"How is your whore?"

"I haven't had one yet."

"I mean the one you write the stories for."

"Oh. The stories."

"Yes. The stories. The dreary dismal little stories about your adolescence with your bogus drunken father."

"He wasn't so bogus really."

"Didn't he defraud his wife and all his friends?"

"No. Just himself really."

"You certainly make him despicable in these last sketches or

vignettes or pointless anecdotes you write about him."

"You mean the stories."

"You call them stories," Catherine said.

"Yes," David said and poured a glass of the lovely cold wine on the bright clear day in the pleasant, sunny room in the clean, comfortable hotel and, sipping it, felt it fail to lift up his dead cold heart.

"Would you like me to go and get Heiress?" Catherine said.

"It wouldn't do to have her think that we'd had a misunderstanding about whose day it is or that we'd taken up solitary drinking together."

"You don't need to get her."

"I'd like to. She took care of you today and I didn't. Really, David, I'm not a bitch yet. I just act and talk like one."

While David waited for Catherine to come back he drank another glass of the champagne and read the Paris edition of *The New York Herald* she had left on the bar. Drinking the wine by himself it did not taste the same and he found a cork in the kitchen to stop up the bottle before he put it back in the ice chest. But the bottle did not feel heavy enough and lifting it against the light that came in the west window he saw how little wine was left and he poured it out and drank it off and put the bottle down on the tiled floor. Even when he drank it off quickly it did nothing for him.

Thank God he was breaking through on the stories now. What had made the last book good was the people who were in it and the accuracy of the detail which made it believable. He had, really, only to remember accurately and the form came by what he would choose to leave out. Then, of course, he could close it like the diaphragm of a camera and intensify it so it could be concentrated to the point where the heat shone bright and the smoke began to rise. He knew that he was getting this now.

What Catherine had said about the stories when she was trying to hurt him had started him thinking about his father and all the

things he had tried to do whatever he could about. Now, he told himself, you must try to grow up again and face what you have to face without being irritable or hurt that someone did not understand and appreciate what you wrote. She understands it less and less. But you've worked well and nothing can touch you as long as you can work. Try to help her now and forget about yourself. Tomorrow you have the story to go over and to make perfect.

But David did not want to think about the story. He cared about the writing more than about anything else, and he cared about many things, but he knew that when he was doing it he must not worry about it nor finger it nor handle it any more than he would open up the door of the darkroom to see how a negative was developing. Leave it alone, he told himself. You are a bloody fool but you know that much.

His thoughts turned to the two girls and he wondered if he should go find them and see what they wanted to do or if they wanted to go off and swim. After all, it was Manta's and his day and she might be waiting. Maybe something could still be salvaged out of the day for all of them. They might be cooking something up. He ought to go by and ask what they wanted to do. Then do it, he told himself. Don't stand here and think about it. Go on and find them.

The door to Marita's room was shut and he knocked on it. They had been talking and when he knocked the talking stopped.

"Who is it?" Marita asked.

He heard Catherine laugh and she said, "Come in whoever you are."

He heard Marita say something to her and Catherine said, "Come in, David."

He opened the door. They were lying in the big bed together side by side; the sheet pulled up under their chins.

"Please come in, David," Catherine said. "We've been waiting for you."

David looked at them, the serious dark girl and the fair laughing

one. Marita looked at him trying to tell him something. Catherine was laughing.

"Won't you come in too, David?"

"I came by to see if you wanted to go to swim or anything," David said.

"I don't want to," Catherine said. "Heiress was in bed asleep and I got into bed with her. She was very good and asked me to leave. She's not a bit unfaithful to you. Not in the least little bit. But won't you come in too so we can both be faithful to you?"

"No," David said.

"Please, David," Catherine said. "It's such a lovely day."

"Do you want to go to swim?" David asked Marita.

"I'd like to," the girl said above the sheet.

"You two puritans," Catherine said. "Please both be reasonable and come to bed David."

"I want to go to swim," Marita said. "Please go out, David."

"Why can't he see you?" Catherine asked. "He sees you at the beach."

"He'll see me at the cove," Marita said. "Please go out, David."

David went out and closed the door without looking back, hearing Marita talking in a low voice to Catherine and Catherine's laughter. He walked down the flagstones to the front of the hotel and looked out at the sea. There was a light breeze now and he watched three French destroyers and a cruiser, neat and dark, and sharply etched on the blue sea as they moved in formation working out some problems. They were far out and they looked to be recognition silhouettes from their size until a white line would show at the bow as a ship speeded up to change the pattern. David watched them until the two girls came up to him.

"Please don't be cross," Catherine said.

They were dressed to go to the beach and Catherine put a bag with the towels and the robes on an iron chair.

"Are you going swimming too?" David said to her.

“If you’re not angry with me.”

David said nothing and watched the ships as they changed course and another destroyer moved out of the pattern at a sharp angle with the line of white curling back from her bows. She began to make smoke and it trailed in a black widening plume as she curved at flank speed.

“It was only a joke,” Catherine said. ‘We’d been making such good rough jokes. You and I had.”

“What are they doing, David?” Marita asked.

“Anti-sub maneuvers, I think,” he said. “Maybe there are subs working with them. They’re probably out from Toulon.”

“They were in Sainte Maxime or Saint Raphael,” Catherine said. “I saw them the other day.”

“I don’t know what it is now with the smoke screen,” David said. “There must be other ships we can’t see.”

“There come the planes,” Marita said. “Aren’t they lovely.”

They were very small, neat sea-planes and three of them were coming around the point low over the water.

“When we were here in the early summer they had gunnery practice off the Porquerolles and it was terrific,” Catherine said. “It shook the window. Will they use depth bombs now, David?”

“I don’t know. I shouldn’t think so if they’re working with real subs.”

“I can go to swim, can’t I please David?” Catherine asked. “I’m going away and then you can swim all the time by yourselves.”

“I asked you to swim,” David said.

“That’s true,” Catherine said. “You did. Then let’s go now and all be friends and happy. If the planes come in close they can see us on the beach at the cove and that will cheer them up.”

The planes did come by close off the cove while David and Marita were swimming far out and Catherine was tanning on the beach. They passed rapidly, three echelons of three, their big Rhône motors roaring suddenly as they flew over then dying away as they

went toward Sainte Maxime.

David and Marita swam back in to the beach and sat on the sand by Catherine.

"They never even looked at me," Catherine said. "They must be very serious boys."

"What did you expect? Aerial photography?" David asked her.

Marita had said very little since they had left the hotel and she said nothing to this.

"It was fun when David really did live with me," Catherine said to her. "I can remember when I liked everything that David did. You must try to like his things too, Heiress. That is if he has any left."

"Do you have any left, David?" Marita asked.

"He traded everything he had in on those stories," Catherine said. "He used to have so many things. I certainly hope you like stories, Heiress."

"I like them," Marita said. She did not look at David but he saw her serene dark face and sea wet hair and smooth lovely skin and her beautiful body as she sat looking out at the sea.

"That's good," Catherine said lazily and took a long deep lazy breath as she stretched out on the beach robe on the sand that was still warm from the afternoon sun. "Because that's what you're going to get. He used to do so many things too and he did them all so beautifully. He had a wonderful life and all he thinks about now is Africa and his drunken father and his press cuttings. His clippings. Has he ever shown you his clippings, Heiress?"

"No, Catherine," Marita said.

"He will," Catherine said. "He tried to show them to me once at le Grau du Roi but I put a stop to that. There were hundreds of them and everyone, almost, had his picture and they were all the same pictures. It's worse than carrying around obscene postcards really. I think he reads them by himself and is unfaithful to me with them. In a wastebasket probably. He always has a wastebasket. He

said himself it was the most important thing for a writer—"

"Let's go in and swim, Catherine," Marita said. "I think I'm getting cold."

"I mean the wastebasket was the most important thing for a writer," Catherine said. "I used to think I ought to get him a really wonderful one that would be worthy of him. But he never puts anything he writes in the wastebasket. He writes in those ridiculous child's notebooks and he doesn't throw anything away. He just crosses things out and writes along the sides of the pages. The whole business is a fraud really. He makes mistakes in spelling and grammar too. Did you know, Marita, that he doesn't even really know grammar?"

"Poor David," Marita said.

"Of course his French is worse," Catherine said. "You've never seen him try to write it. He fakes along well enough in conversation and he's amusing with his slang. But actually he's illiterate."

"Too bad," said David.

"I thought he was wonderful," Catherine said, "until I found he couldn't write even a simple note correctly. But then you'll be able to write in French for him."

"Ta queule," David said cheerfully.

"He's good at that sort of thing," Catherine said. "Quick tags of slang that are probably outdated before he knows it. He speaks very idiomatic French but he can't write it at all. He's really illiterate, Marita, and you have to face it. His handwriting is terrible too. He can't write like a gentleman nor speak like one in any language. Especially not his own."

"Poor David," Marita said.

"I can't say I've given him the best years of my life," Catherine said. "Because I've only lived with him since March I think it was, but I've certainly given him the best months of my life. The ones I've had the most fun in anyway and he certainly made them fun too. I wish it hadn't ended in complete disillusion too but what are

you to do if you discover the man is illiterate and practices solitary vice in a wastebasket full of clippings from something called The Original Romeike's, whoever they are. Any girl would be discouraged and frankly I'm not going to put up with it."

"You take the clippings and burn them," David said. "That would be the soundest thing. Wouldn't you like to go in now and swim, Devil?"

Catherine looked at him slyly.

"How did you know I did it?" she asked.

"Did what?"

"Burned the clippings."

"Did you, Catherine?" Marita asked.

"Of course I did," Catherine said.

David stood looking at her. He felt completely hollow. It was like coming around a curve on a mountain road and the road not being there and only a gulf ahead. Marita was standing now too. Catherine was looking at them her face calm and reasonable.

"Let's go in and swim," Marita said. "We'll just swim out to the point and back."

"I'm glad you're being pleasant finally," Catherine said. "I've been wanting to go in for a long time. It's really getting quite cool. We forget it's September."

Chapter Twenty-Six

They dressed on the beach and climbed up the steep trail with David carrying the bag with the beach things to where the old car was waiting in the pine woods. The got in and David drove back to the hotel in the early evening light. Catherine was quiet in the car and to anyone passing them they might have been returning from any afternoon at one of the unfrequented beaches of the Estérel. The war ships were no longer in sight when they left the car on the driveway, and the sea beyond the pines was blue and calm. The evening was as beautiful and clear as the morning had been.

They walked down to the entrance of the hotel and David took the bag with the beach things into the storeroom and put it down.

"Let me take them," Catherine said. "They ought to go to dry."

"I'm sorry," David said. He turned at the door of the storeroom and walked out and then down to his work room at the end of the hotel. Inside the room he opened the big Vuitton suitcase. The pile of cahiers that the stories had been written in was gone. So were the four bulky envelopes from the bank that had contained the press clippings. The pile of cahiers with the narrative written in them were intact. He closed and locked the suitcase and searched all of the drawers in the armoire and searched the room. He had not believed that the stories could be gone. He had not believed that she could do it. At the beach he had known that she might have done it but it had seemed impossible and he had not really believed it. They had been calm and careful and restrained about it as you were trained to be in danger or emergency or in disaster but it had not seemed possible that it could really have happened.

Now he knew that it had happened but still thought it might be some ghastly joke. So, empty and dead in his heart, he re-opened the suitcase and checked it and after he locked it he checked the room again.

Now there was no danger and no emergency. It was only disaster now. But it couldn't be. She must have hidden them someplace. They could be in the storeroom, or in their own room, or she could have put them in Marita's room. She couldn't really have destroyed them. No one could do that to a fellow human being. He still could not believe that she had done it but he felt sick inside himself when he closed and locked the door.

The two girls were at the bar when David came in. Marita looked up at him and saw how things were and Catherine watched him come in by looking at the mirror. She did not look at him, only at his reflection in the mirror.

"Where did you put them, Devil?" David asked.

She turned away from the mirror and looked at him. "I won't tell you," she said. "I took care of them."

"I wish you'd tell me," David said. "Because I need them very much."

"No, you don't," she said. "They were worthless and I hated them."

"Not the one about Kibo," David said. "You loved Kibo. Don't you remember?"

"He had to go too. I was going to tear him out and keep him but I couldn't find him. Anyway you said he was dead."

David saw Marita look at her and look away. Then she looked back. "Where did you burn them, Catherine?"

"I won't tell you either," Catherine said. "You're part of the same thing."

"Did you burn them with the clipping?" David asked.

"I won't tell you," Catherine said. "You talk to me like a policeman or at school."

“Tell me, Devil. I only want to know.”

“I paid for them,” Catherine said. “I paid the money to do them.”

“I know,” David said. “It was very generous of you. Where did you burn them, Devil?”

“I won’t tell her.”

“No. Just tell me.”

“Ask her to go away.”

“I really have to go anyway,” Marita said. “I’ll see you later, Catherine.”

“That’s good,” Catherine said. “It wasn’t your fault, Heiress.”

David sat on the tall stool by Catherine and she looked in the mirror and watched Marita go out of the room.

“Where did you burn them, Devil?” David asked. “You can tell me now.”

“She wouldn’t understand,” Catherine said. “That’s why I wanted her to go.”

“I know,” said David. “Where did you burn them, Devil?”

“In the iron drum with holes that Madame uses to burn trash,” Catherine said.

“Did everything burn up?”

“Yes. I poured on some petrol from a *bidon* in the *remise.* It made a big fire and everything burned. I did it for you, David, and for all of us.”

“I’m sure you did,” David said. “Did everything burn?”

“Oh yes. We can go out and look if you like but it isn’t necessary. The paper all burned black and I stirred it up with a stick.”

“I’ll just go out and have a look,” David said.

“But you’ll be back,” Catherine said.

“Sure,” David said.

The burning had been in the trash burner which was a former fifty-five-gallon gasoline drum with holes punched in it. The stick

used to stir the ashes, and still freshly blackened on one end, was an old broom handle which had been used in this capacity before. The *bidon* was in the stone shed and contained kerosene. In the drum were a few identifiable charred bits of the green covers of the cahiers, and David found scraps of burnt newsprint and two charred bits of pink paper which he identified as those used by the Romeike's clipping service. On one he could distinguish the Providence RI dateline. The ashes had been well stirred but there would doubtless have been more unburned or charred material if he had cared to sift or examine them patiently. He tore the pink paper with Providence RI printed on it into small pieces and dropped them in the former gasoline drum which he had replaced in an upright position. He reflected that he had never been in Providence, Rhode Island, and replacing the broom handle in the stone shed, where he noticed the presence of his racing bicycle, the tires of which needed inflation, he re-entered the kitchen of the hotel, which was empty, and proceeded to the salon where he joined his wife Catherine at the bar.

"Wasn't it just the way I said?" Catherine asked.

"Yes," David said and sat down on one of the stools and put his elbows on the bar.

"It probably would have been enough to burn the clippings," Catherine said. "But I really thought I ought to make a clean sweep."

"You did, all right," David said.

"Now you can go right on with the narrative and there will be nothing to interrupt you. You can start in the morning."

"Sure," David said.

"I'm glad you're reasonable about it," Catherine said. "You couldn't know how worthless they were, David. I had to show you."

"You couldn't have kept the Kibo one that you liked?"

"I told you I tried to find it. But if you want to rewrite it I can tell it to you word for word."

“That will be fun.”

“It will be really. You’ll see. Do you want me to tell it to you now? We could if you want.”

“No,” David said. “Not just now. Would you write it though?”

“I can’t write things, David. You know that. But I can tell it to you anytime you want. You don’t really care about the others do you? They were worthless.”

“Why did you do it really?”

“To help you. You can go to Africa and write them again when your viewpoint is more mature. The country can’t be changed very much. I think it would be nice if you wrote about Spain instead though. You said the country was almost the same as Africa and there you’d have the advantage of a civilized language.”

David poured himself a whiskey and found a bottle of Perrier, uncapped it and poured some in the glass. He remembered the day they had passed the place where they bottled Perrier water on the plain on the way to Aigues Mortes and how—“Let’s not talk about writing,” he said to Catherine.

“I like to,” Catherine said. “When it’s constructive and has some valid purpose. You always wrote so well until you started those stories. The worst thing was the dirt and the flies and the cruelty and the bestiality. You seemed almost to grovel in it. That horrible one about the massacre in the crater and the heartlessness of your own father.”

“Can we not talk about them?” David asked.

“I want to talk about them,” Catherine said. “I want to make you realize why it was necessary to burn them.”

‘Write it out,” David said. “I’d rather not hear it now.”

“But I can’t write things, David.”

“You will,” David said.

“No. But I’ll tell them to someone who can write them,” Catherine said. “If you were friendly you’d write them for me. If you really loved me you’d be happy to.”

“All I want to do is kill you,” David said. “And the only reason I don’t do it is because you are crazy.”

“You can’t talk to me like that, David.”

“No?”

“No, you can’t. You can’t. Do you hear me?”

“I hear you.”

“Then hear me say you can’t say such things. You can’t say horrible things like that to me.”

“I hear you,” David said.

“You can’t say such things. I won’t stand for it. I’ll divorce you.”

“That would be very welcome.”

“Then I’ll stay married to you and never give you a divorce.”

“That would be pretty.”

“I’ll do anything I want to you.”

“You have.”

“I’ll kill you.”

“I wouldn’t give a shit,” David said.

“You can’t even talk like a gentleman at a time like this.”

“What would a gentleman say at a time like this?”

“That he was sorry.”

“All right,” David said. “I’m sorry. I’m sorry I ever met you. I’m sorry I ever married you—”

“So am I.”

“Shut up please. You can tell it to somebody who can write it down. I’m sorry your mother ever met your father and that they ever made you. I’m sorry you were born and that you grew up. I’m sorry for everything we ever did good or bad—”

“You’re not.”

“No,” he said. “I’ll shut up. I didn’t mean to make a speech.”

“You’re just really sorry for yourself.”

“Possibly,” David said. “But shit, Devil, why did you have to burn them? The stories?”

“I had to, David,” she said. “I’m sorry if you don’t understand.”

He had understood really before he had asked her the question and the question had been, he realized, a rhetorical one. He disliked rhetoric and distrusted those who used it and he was ashamed to have fallen into it. He drank the whiskey and Perrier slowly while he thought how untrue it was that everything that was understood was forgiven and he tightened his own discipline as conscientiously as he would have worked in the old days with the mechanic and the armorer going over the plane, the engine and his guns. It was not necessary then because they did the work perfectly but it was one way of not thinking, and it was, to use a wet word, comforting. Now it was necessary because what he had said to Catherine about killing her he had said quite truly and not rhetorically. He was ashamed of the speech which had followed the statement. But there was nothing he could do about the statement which was truly made except tighten his discipline so that he would have it in case he began to lose control. He poured himself another whiskey and put in Perrier again and watched the small bubbles form and break. God damn her to hell, he thought.

"I'm sorry to be stuffy," he said. "I understand of course."

"I'm so glad, David," she said. "I'm going away in the morning."

"Where?"

"To Hendaye and then to Paris to see about artists for the book."

"Really?"

"Yes. I think I should. We've wasted time as it is and today I made so much progress that I just need to keep on."

"How are you going?"

"With the Bug."

"You shouldn't drive alone."

"I want to."

"You shouldn't, Devil. Really. I couldn't let you."

"Can I go on the train? There's one to Bayonne. I can rent a car there or in Biarritz."

"Can we talk about it in the morning?"

“I want to talk about it now.”

“You shouldn’t go, Devil.”

“I’m going,” she said. “You’re not going to stop me.”

“I’m only thinking about the best way.”

“No, you’re not. You’re trying to stop me.”

“If you wait we’ll go together.”

“I don’t want to go together. I want to go tomorrow and in the Bug. If you don’t agree I’ll go by train. You can’t stop anyone from going on the train. I’m of age and because I’m married to you doesn’t make me your slave or your chattel. I’m going and you can’t stop me.”

“Will you be coming back?”

“I plan to.”

“I see.”

“You don’t see but it doesn’t make any difference. This is a reasoned and coordinated project. These things aren’t just tossed off —”

“Into a wastebasket,” David said and remembered the discipline and sipped the whiskey and Perrier.

“Are you going to see your lawyers in Paris?” he asked.

“If I have any business with them. I usually see my lawyers. Just because you don’t have any lawyers doesn’t mean everyone else doesn’t have to see their lawyers. Do you want my lawyers to do anything for you?”

“No,” David said. “Fuck your lawyers.”

“Do you have plenty of money?”

“I’m quite all right on money.”

“Really, David? Weren’t the stories worth a lot? It’s bothered me terribly and I know my responsibility. I’ll find out and do exactly what I should.”

“You’ll what?”

“Do exactly what I should.”

“Just what is it you propose to do?”

‘I’ll have their value determined and I’ll have twice that paid into your bank.”

“Sounds very generous,” David said. “You were always generous.”

“I want to be just, David, and it’s possible that they were worth, financially, much more than they would be appraised at.”

“Who appraises these things?”

“There must be people who do. There are people who appraise everything.”

“What sort of people?”

“I wouldn’t know, David. But I can imagine such people as the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly, Harper’s, La Nouvelle Revue Françoise.*”

“I’m going out for a while,” David said. “Do you feel all right?”

“Except for the fact that I feel I’ve probably done a great wrong to you that I must try to set right I feel very well,” Catherine said. “That was one reason I was going to Paris. I didn’t want to tell you.”

“Let’s not discuss casualties,” David said. “So you want to go on the train?”

“No. I want to go in the Bug.”

“All right. Go in the Bug. Just drive carefully and don’t pass on hills.”

“I’ll drive the way you taught me and I’ll pretend you’re with me all the time and talk to you and tell us stories and make up stories about how I saved your life. I always make those up. And with you it will all seem so much shorter and effortless and the speed won’t seem fast. I’m going to have fun.”

“Good,” said David. “Take it as easy as you can. Sleep at Nîmes the first night unless you get off early. They know us at the Imperator.”

“I thought I’d get to Carcassonne.”

“No, Devil, please.”

“Perhaps I can get off early and make Carcassonne. I’d go by

Arles and Montpellier and not lose time by Nîmes."

"If you get off late stop at Nîmes."

"It seems so babyish," she said.

"I'll drive with you," he said. "I should."

"No, please. It's important that I do this by myself. It really is. I wouldn't have you."

"All right," he said. "But I ought to go."

"Please don't. You must have confidence in me, David. I'll drive carefully and I'll drive it right straight through."

"You couldn't, Devil. It gets dark early now."

"You mustn't worry. You're sweet to let me go," Catherine said. "But you always did. If I did anything I shouldn't I hope you can forgive me. I'll miss you terribly. I miss you already. Next time we'll drive it together."

"You've had a very busy day," David said. "You're tired. At least let me run your Bugatti down to town and back and give it a check."

He stopped at Marita's door and said, "Do you want to go for a ride?"

"Yes," she said.

"Come on then," he told her.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

David got into the car and Marita climbed in beside him and he put the car at a stretch of road where the sand drifted across from the beach and then throttled back and held it in, watching the papyrus grass ahead on his left and the empty beach and the sea on his right as he saw the black road ahead. He put the car at the road again until he saw the white painted bridge coming at him fast then held his speed as he calculated the distance, raised his foot from the throttle and pumped the brakes gently. She was steady and lost momentum at each pump with no deviation and no binding. He brought the car to a stop before the bridge, downshifted and then put her at the road again in a rising disciplined snarl along the N.6 to Cannes.

"She burned them all," he said.

"Oh David," Marita said and they drove on into Cannes where the lights were on now and David stopped the car under the trees in front of the cafe where they had first met.

"Wouldn't you rather go somewhere else?" Marita asked.

"I don't care," David said. "It doesn't make a hell of a lot of difference."

"If you'd rather just drive," Marita offered.

"No. I'd rather cool out," David said. "I just wanted to see if the car was in shape for her to drive it."

"She's going?"

"She says so."

They were sitting at the table on the terrace in the dappled shadow of the leaves of the trees. The waiter had brought Marita a

Tio Pepe and David a whiskey and Perrier.

"Do you want me to go with her?" Marita said.

"You don't really think anything will happen to her?"

"No, David. I think she's done her damage for a while."

"Could be," David said. "She burned every fucking thing except the narrative. The stuff about her."

"It's a wonderful narrative," Marita said.

"Don't buck me up," David said. "I wrote it and I wrote what she burned. Don't give me the stuff they feed the troops."

"You can write them again."

"No," David told her. "When it's right you can't remember. Every time you read it again it comes as a great and unbelievable surprise. You can't believe you did it. When it's once right you never can do it again. You only do it once for each thing. And you're only allowed so many in your life."

"So many what?"

"So many good ones."

"But you can remember them. You must."

"Not me and not you and not anybody. They're gone. Once I get them right they're gone."

"She was wicked to you."

"No," David said.

"What then?"

"Hurried," David said. "Everything today was because she was hurried really."

"I hope you'll be as kind to me."

"You just stay around and help me not to kill her. You know what she's going to do don't you? She's going to pay me for the stories so that I won't lose anything."

"No."

"Yes she is. She's going to have her lawyers have them appraised in some fantastic Rube Goldberg manner and then she's going to pay me double the appraisal price."

“Truly, David, she didn’t say that.”

“She said it and it’s infinitely sound. Only the details need working out and what’s more the doubling of the appraisal or whatever makes it generous and gives her pleasure.”

“You can’t let her drive alone, David.”

“I know it.”

“What are you going to do?”

“I don’t know. But let’s sit here for a little while,” David said.

“There isn’t any hurry now. I think she’s probably tired and gone to sleep. I’d like to go to sleep too, with you, and wake up and find the stuff all there and not gone and go to work again.”

“We will sleep and someday when you wake up you’ll work as wonderfully as you did this morning.”

“You’re awfully good,” David said. “But you certainly got into a fine lot of trouble when you came in here that night, didn’t you?”

“Don’t try to put me outside,” Marita said. “I know what I got into.”

“Sure,” said David. “We both know. Do you want another drink?”

“If you do,” Marita said and then, “I didn’t know it was a battle when I came.”

“Neither did I.”

“With you it’s really only you against time.”

“Not the time that’s Catherine’s.”

“Only because her time is different. She’s panicked by it. You said tonight that all of today was only hurry. That wasn’t true but it was perceptive. And you won so well over time for so long.”

Very much later he called for the waiter and paid for the drinks and left a good tip and he had started the car and put on the lights and was letting out the clutch when what had really happened came back to him again. It was back as clear and unblurred as when he had first looked into the trash burner and seen the ashes that had been stirred by the broomstick. He pushed his headlights carefully

out through the quiet and empty evening of the town and followed them along the port onto the road. He felt Marita's shoulder by him and heard her say, "I know, David. It hit me too."

"Don't let it."

"I'm glad it did. There's nothing to do but we'll do it."

"Good."

"We'll really do it. *Toi et moi."*

Chapter Twenty-Eight

At the hotel Madame came in from the kitchen when David and Marita came into the main room. She had a letter in her hand.

"Madame took the train for Biarritz," she said. "She left this letter for Monsieur."

"When did she go?" David asked.

"Immediately after Monsieur and Madame left," Madame Aurol said. "She sent the boy to the station for the ticket and to reserve a *wagon-lit."*

David began reading the letter.

"What would you eat?" Madame said. "Some cold chicken and a salad? An omelette to start. There's lamb too if Monsieur would rather. What would he like, Madame?"

Marita and Madame Aurol were talking together and David finished reading the letter. He put it in his pocket and looked at Madame Aurol. "Did she seem herself when she left?"

"Perhaps not, Monsieur."

"She'll be back," David said.

"Yes, Monsieur."

"We will take good care of her."

"Yes, Monsieur." She began to cry a little as she turned the omelette and David put his arm around her and kissed her. "Go and talk to Madame," she said, "and let me set the table. Aurol and the boy are at Napoule, mixing *belote* and politics."

"I'll set it," Marita said. "Open the wine, David, please. Don't you think we should have a bottle of the Lanson?"

He closed the door of the ice chest and holding the cold bottle

untwisted the seal and loosened the wire and then carefully moved the cork between his thumb and first finger feeling the pinch of metal cap against his thumb and the long cold rounded promise of the bottle. He brought the cork out gently and poured three glasses full. Madame stood back from the stove with her glass and they all raised their glasses. David did not know what to drink to so he said the first words that came which were, *"À nous et à la liberté."*

They all drank and then Madame served the omelette and they all drank again without making a toast.

"Eat, David, please," Marita said.

"All right," he said and drank some of the wine and ate some of the omelette slowly.

"Just eat a little," Marita said. "It will be good for you." Madame looked at Marita and shook her head. "Nothing is helped by your not eating," Madame told him.

"Sure," said David and ate slowly and carefully and drank the champagne that was born new each time he poured a glass.

"Where did she leave the car?" he asked.

"At the station," Madame said. "The boy rode down with her. He brought back the key. It's in your room."

"Was the *wagon-lit* crowded?"

"No. He put her aboard. There were very few passengers. She will have a place."

"It's not a bad train," David said.

"Eat some chicken," Madame said, "and drink some more wine. Open another bottle. Your women are thirsty too."

"I'm not thirsty," Marita said.

"Yes, you are," Madame said. "Drink up now and take a bottle with you. I know this one. It's good for him to drink good wine."

"I don't want to drink too much, *chérie,"* David said to Madame. "Because tomorrow is a bad day and I'd rather not feel bad too."

"You won't. I know you. Just eat now to please me."

She excused herself in a few minutes and was gone for a quarter

of an hour. David ate all of his chicken and the salad finally and after she had come back they all had a glass of wine together and then David and Marita said good night to Madame who was very formal now and went out onto the terrace and looked at the night. They were both in a hurry and David was carrying the opened bottle of wine in an ice bucket. He put it down on the stove and took Marita in his arms and kissed her. They held each other close and said nothing and then David picked up the bucket and they walked to Marita's room.

Her bed had been made up now for two people and David put the ice bucket down on the floor and said, "Madame."

"Yes," Marita said. "Naturally."

They lay together with the night clear and cool outside and the small breeze from the sea and Marita said, "I love you, David, and it's so sure now."

Sure, David thought. Sure. Nothing is sure.

"All the time before now," Marita said, "before I could sleep all night with you I've thought and thought you wouldn't like the sort of wife who couldn't sleep."

'What sort of wife are you?"

"You'll see. A happy one now."

Then he felt it was a long time before he went to sleep but really it was not and when he woke at the first gray light he saw Marita in the bed beside him and was happy until he remembered what had happened. He was very careful not to wake her but when she stirred he kissed her before he stepped out of bed. She smiled and said, "Good morning, David," and he said, "Go back to sleep my dearest love."

She said, "All right," and rolled over quickly like a small animal and, dark headed, lay curled up with her closed eyes away from the light and her long dark shiny eyelashes against the rose brown early morning color of her skin. David looked at her and thought how beautiful she was and how he could see her spirit had not gone

from her body when she slept. She was lovely and her coloring and the unbelievable smoothness of her skin were almost Javanese, he thought. He watched the coloring in her face deepen as the light grew stronger. Then he shook his head and carrying his clothing on his left arm opened and closed the door and went out into the new morning, walking barefoot on the stones that were still wet with dew.

In his and Catherine's room he took a shower, shaved, found a fresh shirt and shorts and put them on, looked around the empty bedroom, the first morning he had ever been in it with Catherine not there, and then went out to the empty kitchen and found a tin of Maquereau Vin Blanc Capitaine Cook and opened it and took it, perilous with edge-level juice, with a cold bottle of the Tuborg beer out to the bar.

He opened the beer, took the bottle top between his right thumb and the first joint of his right forefinger and bent it in until it was flattened together, put it in his pocket since he saw no container to toss it into, raised the bottle that was still cold to his hand and now beaded wet in his fingers and, smelling the aroma from the opened tin of spiced and marinated mackerel, he took a long drink of the cold beer, set it down on the bar and took an envelope from his hip pocket and unfolded Catherine's letter and commenced to reread it.

David, I knew very suddenly you must know how terrible it was. Worse than hitting someone, a child is the worst I guess—with a car. The thump on the fender or maybe just a small bump and then all the rest of it happening and the crowd gathering to scream. The Frenchwoman screaming *écrasseuse* even if it was the child's fault. I did it and I knew I did it and I can't undo it. It's too awful to understand. But it happened.

I'll cut this short. I'll be back and we'll settle things the best we can. Do not worry at all. I'll wire and write and do all the things for my book so if you ever finish it only I will try to do this one thing. I had to burn the other things. The worst was being righteous about

it but I don't have to tell you that. I do not ask for forgiveness but please have good luck and I will do everything as well as I can.

Heiress has been good to you and me both and I don't hate her.

I won't end as I'd like to because it would sound too preposterous to believe but I will say it anyway since I was always rude and presumptuous and preposterous too lately as we both know. I love you and I always will and I am sorry. What a useless word.

Catherine

After he had finished it he read it through again.

He had never read any other letters from Catherine because from the time they had met at the Crillon bar in Paris until they were married at the American church at Avenue Hoche they had seen each other every day and, reading this first one now for the third time, he found that he still could be, and was, moved by her.

He put the letter back in his hip pocket and ate a second small, plump, miniature mackerel in the aromatic white wine sauce and finished the cold beer. Then he went out to the kitchen for a piece of bread to sop up the liquid in the long tin and for a fresh bottle of beer. He would try to work today and would almost certainly fail. There had been too much emotion, too much damage, too much of everything and his changing of allegiance, no matter how sound it had seemed, no matter how it simplified things for him, was a grave and violent thing and this letter compounded the gravity and the violence.

All right Bourne, he thought as he began to drink the second beer, don't spend time thinking how bad things are because you know. You have three choices. Try to remember one that is gone and write it again. Second, you can try a new one. And third, write on the god damned narrative. So sharpen up and take the best one. You always gambled when you could bet on yourself. Never bet on anything that can talk, your father said and you said, Except yourself. And he said, Not me, Davey, but pile it on yourself

sometime you iron-hearted little bastard. He meant to say cold-hearted but he turned it kindly with his gently lying mouth. Or maybe he meant it. Don't con yourself on Tuborg beer.

So take the best one and write one new and good as you can. And remember, Marita has been hit as badly as you. Maybe worse. So gamble. She cares as much for what we lost as you do.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

When he finally gave up writing that day it was afternoon. He had started a sentence as soon as he had gone into his working room and had completed it but he could write nothing after it. He crossed it out and started another sentence and again came to the complete blankness. He was unable to write the sentence that should follow although he knew it. He wrote a first simple declarative sentence again and it was impossible for him to put down the next sentence on paper. At the end of two hours it was the same. He could not write more than a single sentence and the sentences themselves were increasingly simple and completely dull. He kept at it for four hours before he knew that resolution was powerless against what had happened. He admitted it without accepting it, closed and put away the notebook with the rows of crossed out lines and went to find the girl.

She was on the terrace in the sun reading and when she looked up and saw his face she said, “No?”

“Worse than no.”

“Not at all?”

“Nope.”

“Let’s have a drink,” Marita said.

“Good,” said David.

They were inside at the bar and the day had come in with them. It was as good as the day before and perhaps better since summer should have been gone and each warm day was an extra thing. We should not waste it, David thought. We should try to make it good and save it if we can. He mixed the martinis and poured them and

when they tasted them they were icy cold and dry.

"You were right to try this morning," Marita said. "But let's not think about it anymore today."

"Good," he said.

He reached for the bottle of Gordon's, the Noilly Prat and the stirring pitcher, poured out the water from the ice, and using his empty glass commenced to measure out two more drinks.

"It's a lovely day," he said. "What should we do?"

"Let's go to swim now," Marita said. "So we won't waste the day."

"Good," David said. "Should I tell Madame that we'll be late for lunch?"

"She put a cold lunch up," Marita said. "I thought that probably you'd like to swim however work went."

"That was intelligent," David said. "How is Madame?"

"She has a slightly discolored eye," Marita said.

"No."

Marita laughed.

They drove up the road and around the promontory through the forest and left the car in the broken shade of the pine woods and carried the lunch basket and the beach gear down the trail to the cove. There was a little breeze from the east and the sea was dark and blue as they came down through the stone pines. The rocks were red and the sand of the cove was yellow and wrinkled and the water, as they came to it, clean and now amber clear over the sand. They put the basket and the rucksack in the shade of the biggest rock and undressed and David climbed the tall rock to dive. He stood there naked and brown in the sun looking out to the sea.

"Want to dive?" he called. She shook her head.

"I'll wait for you."

"No," she called up and waded out into the water up to her thighs.

"How is it?" David called down.

"Much cooler than it's ever been. Almost cold."

"Good," he said, and as she watched him and waded, the water came over her belly and touched her breasts and he straightened, rose on his toes, seemed to hang slowly without falling and then knifed out and down, making a boil in the water that a porpoise might have made reentering slickly into the hole that he had made in rising. She swam out toward the circle of milling water and then he rose beside her and held her up and close and then put his salty mouth against her own.

"Elle est bonne, la mer," he said. *"Toi aussi."*

They swam out of the cove and beyond into the deep water past where the mountain dropped down into the sea, and lay on their backs and Boated. The water was colder than it had been but the very top was warmed a little and Marita floated with her back arched high, her head all underwater but her nose, and her brown breasts were lapped gently by the movement the light breeze gave the sea. Her eyes were shut against the sun and David was beside her in the water. His arm was under her head and then he kissed the tip of her left breast and then the other breast.

"They taste like the sea," he said.

"Let's go to sleep out here."

"Could you?"

"It's too hard to keep my back arched."

"Let's swim way out and then swim in."

"All right."

They swam far out, further than they had ever swum before, far enough so they could see past the next headland and on out until they could see the broken purple line of the mountains behind the forest. They lay there in the water and watched the coast. Then they swam in slowly. They stopped to rest when they lost the mountains and again when they lost the headland and then swam slowly and strongly on in past the entrance to the cove and pulled themselves out on the beach.

“Are you tired?” David asked.

“Very,” Marita said. She had never swum that far before.

“Are you still pounding?”

“Oh I’m fine.”

David walked up the beach and over to the rock and found one of the bottles of Tavel and two towels.

“You look like a seal,” David said sitting down beside her on the sand.

He handed her the Tavel and she drank from the bottle and handed it back. He took a long drink and then on the smooth dry sand, stretched out in the sun, the lunch basket by them and the wine cool as they drank from the bottle, Marita said, “Catherine wouldn’t have gotten tired.”

“The hell she wouldn’t. She never swam that far.”

“Truly.”

“We swam a long way, girl. I was never out where we could see those backdrop mountains before.”

“All right,” she said. “There isn’t anything we can do about her today so let’s not think about it. David?”

“Yes.”

“Do you still love me?”

“Yes. Very much.”

“Perhaps I made a great mistake with you and you’re just being kind to me.”

“You didn’t make any mistakes and I’m not being kind to you.”

Marita took a handful of radishes and ate them slowly and drank some wine. The radishes were young and crisp and sharp in flavor.

“You don’t have to worry about working,” she said. “I know. That will be all right.”

“Sure,” David said.

He cut one of the artichoke hearts up with the fork and ate a chunk swirled in the mustard sauce Madame had made.

“May I have the Tavel?” Marita said. She took a good swallow of

the wine and set the bottle down by David putting its base firmly in the sand and leaning it against the basket. “Isn’t it a good lunch Madame made, David?”

“It’s an excellent lunch. Did Aurol really give her a black eye?”

“Not a real one.”

“She has a bad tongue with him.”

“There’s the difference in age and he was within his rights to hit her if she was insulting. She said so. At the end. And she sent you messages.”

“What messages?”

“Just loving messages.”

“She loves *you*,” David said.

“No. You stupid. She’s only on my side.”

“There aren’t any sides anymore,” David said.

“No,” Marita said. “And we didn’t try to make sides. It just happened.”

“It happened all right.” David handed her the jar with the cut up artichoke heart and the dressing and found the second bottle of Tavel. It was still cool. He took a long drink of the wine. “We’ve been burned out,” he said. “Crazy woman burned out the Bournes.”

“Are we the Bournes?”

“Sure. We’re the Bournes. It may take a while to have the papers. But that’s what we are. Do you want me to write it out? I think I could write that.”

“You don’t need to write it.”

“I’ll write it in the sand,” David said.

They slept well and naturally through the late afternoon and when the sun was low Marita woke and saw David lying in the bed by her side. His lips were closed and he was breathing very slowly and she looked at his face and his covered eyes that she had only seen lidded in sleep twice before and looked at his chest and his body with the arms straight by his sides. She went over to the door of the bathroom and looked at herself in the full length mirror. Then she smiled at the mirror. When she was dressed she went out to the kitchen and talked with Madame.

Later, David was still asleep and she sat by him on the bed. In the dusk his hair was whitish against his dark face, and she waited for him to wake.

They sat at the bar and were both drinking Haig Pinch and Perrier. Marita was being very careful with her drink. She said, “I think you should go to town every day and get the papers and have a drink and read by yourself. I wish there was a club or a real cafe where you met your friends.”

“There isn’t.”

“Well, I think it would be good every day for you to be away from me for a while when you’re not working. You’ve been overrun with girls. I’m always going to see you have your men friends. That’s one thing very bad that Catherine did.”

“Not on purpose and it was my own fault.”

“Maybe that’s true. But do you think we’ll have friends? Good friends?”

“We each have one already.”

“Will we have others?”

“Maybe.”

“Will they take you away because they know more than I do?”

“They won’t know more.”

“Will they come along young and new and fresh with new things and you be tired of me?”

“They won’t and I won’t be.”

“I’ll kill them if they do. I’m not going to give you away to anyone the way she did.”

“That’s good.”

“I want you to have men friends and friends from the war and to shoot with and to play cards at the club. But we don’t have to have you have women friends, do we? Fresh, new ones who will fall in love and really understand you and all that?”

“I don’t run around with women. You know that.”

“They are new all the time,” Marita said. “There are new ones every day. No one can ever be sufficiently warned. You most of all.”

“I love you,” David said, “and you’re my partner too. But take it easy. Just be with me.”

“I’m with you.”

“I know it and I love to look at you and know you’re here and that we’ll sleep together and be happy.”

In the dark, Marita lay against him and he felt her breasts against his chest and her arm behind his head and her hand touching him and lips against his.

“I’m your girl,” she said in the dark. “Your girl. No matter what I’m always your girl. Your good girl who loves you.”

“Yes, my dearest love. Sleep well. Sleep well.”

“You go to sleep first,” Marita said, “and I’ll be back in a minute.”

He was asleep when she came back and she got in under the sheet and lay beside him. He was sleeping on his right side and breathing softly and steadily.

Chapter Thirty

David woke in the morning when the first light came in the window. it was still gray outside and there were different pine trunks than the ones he usually woke to see and a longer gap beyond them toward the sea. His right arm was stiff because he had slept on it. Then, awake, he knew he was in a strange bed and he saw Marita lying sleeping by him. He remembered everything and he looked at her lovingly and covered her fresh brown body with the sheet and then kissed her very lightly again and putting on his dressing gown walked out into the dew-wet early morning carrying the image of how she looked with him to his room. He took a cold shower, shaved, put on a shirt and a pair of shorts and walked down to his working room. He stopped at the door of Marita's room and opened it very carefully. He stood and looked at her sleeping, and closed the door softly and went into the room where he worked. He got out his pencils and a new cahier, sharpened five pencils and began to write the story of his father and the raid in the year of the Maji-Maji rebellion that had started with the trek across the bitter lake. He made the crossing now and completed the dreadful trek of the first day when the sunrise had caught them with the part that had to be done in the dark only half finished and the mirages already making as the heat became unbearable. By the time the morning was well advanced and a strong fresh east breeze was blowing through the pines from the sea he had finished the night at the first camp under the fig trees where the water came down from the escarpment and was moving out of that camp in the early morning and up the long draw that led to the steep cut up

onto the escarpment.

He found he knew much more about his father than when he had first written this story and he knew he could measure his progress by the small things which made his father more tactile and to have more dimensions than he had in the story before. He was fortunate, just now, that his father was not a simple man.

David wrote steadily and well and the sentences that he had made before came to him complete and entire and he put them down, corrected them, and cut them as if he were going over proof. Not a sentence was missing and there were many that he put down as they were returned to him without changing them. By two o'clock he had recovered, corrected and improved what it had taken him five days to write originally. He wrote on a while longer now and there was no sign that any of it would ever cease returning to him intact.

About the Author

Ernest Hemingway was one of America's foremost journalists and authors. A winner of both the Pulitzer Prize (1953) and the Nobel Prize for Literature (1954), Hemingway is widely credited with driving a fundamental shift in prose writing in the early twentieth century. As an American expatriate in Paris in the 1920s, Ernest Hemingway achieved international fame with such literary works as *The Sun Also Rises*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which depicts his experience as a correspondent during the Spanish Civil War. Hemingway died in 1961, leaving behind a rich literary legacy.

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